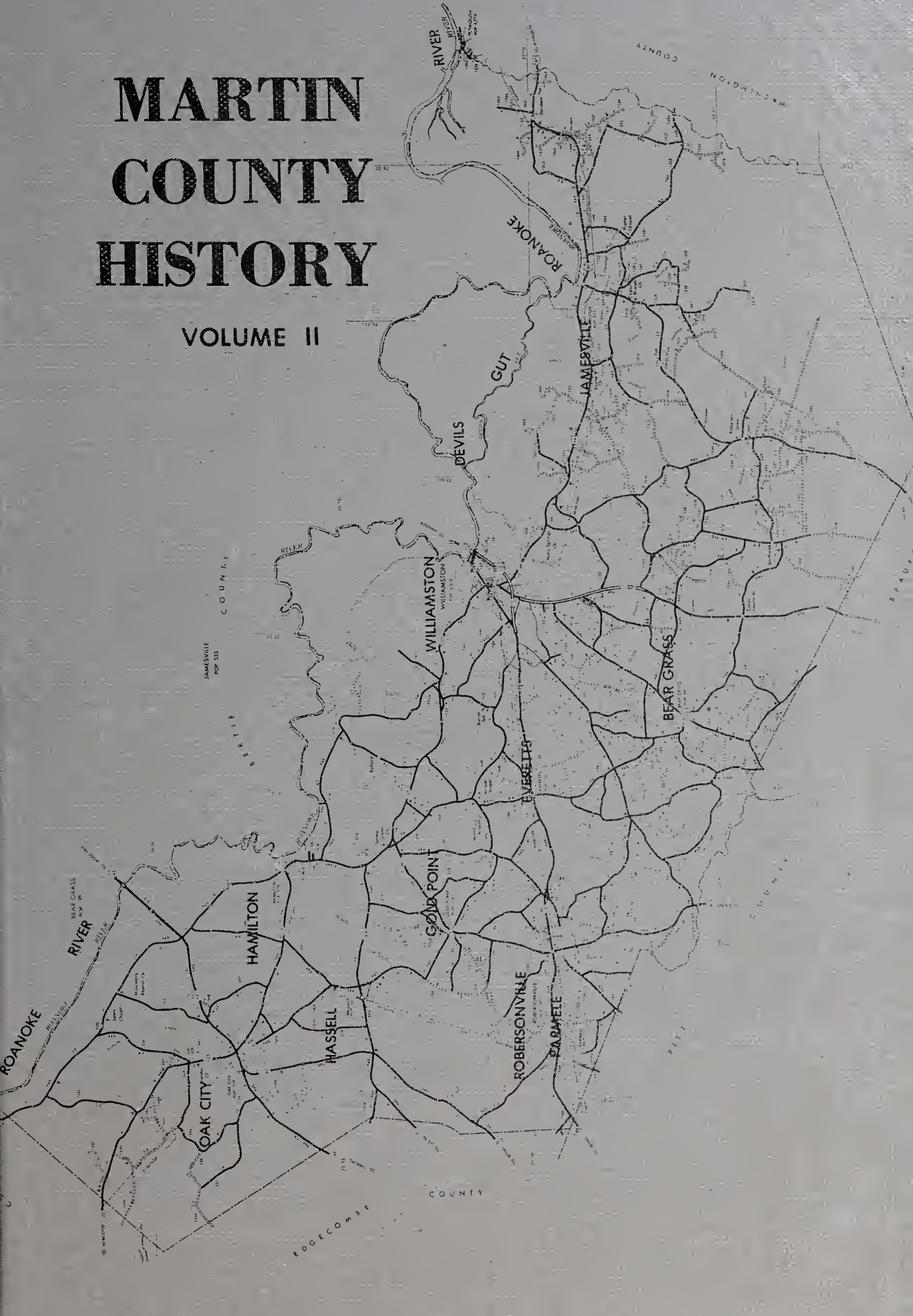
MARTIN COUNTY HISTORY

VOLUME II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MARTIN
COUNTY
HISTORY
Volume II
INDEXED

BY
FRANCIS M. MANNING
And W. H. BOOKER

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INTRODUCTION

Introducing "Martin County History", Volume II, the surviving author explains that its publication was delayed by the death of Walter Herman (Jack) Booker, who compiled most of the data following extensive research. Shortly before his death on October 30, 1976, Mr. Booker had not completed all his subjects, making necessary a second review of the source material.

Following the publication of the volumes, "Religion and Education in Martin County", and "Martin County History", Volume I, the surviving author has often thought about what Job is credited with saying, "Oh! that my adversaries had written a book." While the volumes reflect the work of amateur authors, considerable research was made in the libraries at Duke University and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Archives and History, Raleigh. The authors are greatly indebted to those who dug out pertinent facts from diaries, old books and other records, including a goodly number of personal records found in the libraries.

Admittedly, the volumes come up short in many instances, but diligent efforts were made to provide as many historical facts as possible about Martin County, its subdivisions and the towns therein. It was planned to expand the categories, but the death of one of the authors and the advancing years of the surviving one made it necessary to change those plans and limit the contents to eight fields or subjects.

One subject of the current volume deals with transportation—water, highway and rail. Another chapter has to do with agriculture, and still another reviews commerce and industry in the county. Corporations, including non-profit organizations, are listed in another chapter. Accommodations, including "ordinaries", rooming houses, boarding houses, hotels, motels and restaurants, are reviewed in still another chapter. Banking and savings and loan associations are briefly reviewed. Lastly but not least there is a composite picture of weather in Martin County. Quite a few of the weather facts, limited in the early years mostly to extremes, are based on entries found in the late Cushing Biggs Hassell's diary, and a personal letter from Samuel Johnston to his brother-in-law.

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It was the wish of the surviving author to dedicate this volume to the memory of his father, William Christian Manning, Sr., who served as editor of "The Enterprise" from 1908 to 1938, and who, on numerous occasions, stressed the need for recorded historical facts about Martin County. The surviving author succeeded his father in January, 1938, struggling since that time to maintain the traditions so firmly established before him.

After several delays experienced in preparing the text of this volume, D. Lee Reynolds, "The Enterprise" news editor, was recruited to help make certain alterations and complete the contents. The surviving author is indebted to him for his valuable help. The research work of Stephen Rowe, Archives and History, Raleigh; David W. Brown, Manuscript Depatment, Duke Library, Durham; and Harry McKnown, U.N.C. History Department, Chapel Hill, helped make this book possible. The surviving author is also grateful to Mrs. Erla White Mizelle, typesetter, who composed the body type; to Shelton Bailey, commercial printer who printed the pages in the Enterprise office; to James C. Manning, retired superintendent of Martin County schools, who did special research at the local level; and to Mrs. Margaret Manning Muse, sister of the surviving author, and Mrs. Mary James Skinner, secretary, who worked quite a few days proofreading the text. And to any others who aided in any way in preparing the history and its publication. Especially, the surviving author is indeed grateful to all those who helped finance the project with book purchases.—FMM.

CHAPTER I

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation was a relatively simple matter when the first settlers began moving into the region that was later to become Martin County. Either those first-comers lived on or near a stream of some sort or they did not travel around much. Certainly they were not able to engage in commerce except by water transportation, as the only land routes for those early years were Indian trails and a few cart paths that linked neighbor to neighbor in the hinterlands.

The Roanoke River—along with its tributaries—constituted the life-stream of Martin County for much of the first 200 years of its existence. Despite being deep, swift, and treacherous, it provided about the only means of ingress and egress for the territory, and its fish were principal items in the food supply of the inhabitants of the county until recent years. Early settlements were clustered entirely on the banks of the Roanoke, and it became the channel for much of the progress and development that followed over the years.

Practically every type of vessel has been used on the Roanoke, from the Indian dugout canoe to several types of ocean-going motorships in more recent years. The first of the white man's craft to navigate Roanoke waters were the two wherries manned by Governor Lane and 40 men from the Roanoke Island settlement in 1585. Motive power for these vessels was provided by oars. Then came both small and good-sized flatboats—most of them rowed and steered by sweeps—and sailing vessels of various sizes and types, some large enough to operate between river ports and the West Indies, bringing rum and molasses and returning laden with tar, pitch, turpentine, shingles, and like products of the section. The hey-day of the river traffic, however, was reached after the steamboat was invented and before the first railroads were built into the section. There were scores of steam packets and steamship lines operating on the Roanoke, continuing well on up through the first part of the present century. To this day, the river handles a considerable tonnage of timber and oil products by barges and motorships.

Water transportation was by no means confined to the Roanoke River in Martin County in those early days, however. The several creeks were also used extensively to get forest and farm products to central points for shipment out of the area. Inspection stations were established at a number of landings on the creeks, this being a necessary prerequisite to export trade.

A petition signed by 50 citizens of Martin County was read in both houses of the North Carolina General Assembly on December 1, 1800, asking that body to grant "the privileges through the lands of Mr. Matthew Yarrell to extend the navigation of Tranter's Creek as far as Joseph Gainer's Bridge or Wynne's Bridge as he, the said Yarrell, his heirs or assigns, may think most advantageous to the subscribers and himself, mill dams excepted...." They also asked for "inspection landings on said creek for from one, two, three or four miles to, which is mostly naval stores, lumber, etc., which our county much abounds in." There is no record of any action being taken on the petition after it was referred to a committee.

Prior to 1825, there was a warehouse on the Roanoke River at Hamilton, serving the river freight trade. John Taylor had owned the property before that time. His executors in 1823 sold the warehouse at the Hamilton Public Landing and town lots Nos. 50, 51, 52, and 53 to William Wilson of New York for $1,000. Two years later, in 1825, Wilson sold the property to Horace Holloman and William Churchill of Boston for $1,500. Next, John Cloman gained possession of the property, and he sold it to Waldo and Spruill, a mercantile firm in Hamilton. In 1843, Spruill sold his half interest to Waldo for $625, and in 1855 Joseph Waldo sold the property to "Sebrell" for $6,000.

The Roanoke Navigation Company was chartered in 1812 and granted a virtual monopoly for transportation on the Roanoke River. It was said that tobacco was the principal commodity handled by the company. There is a record of six hogsheads of tobacco being loaded on flatboats drawing about 18 inches of water, possibly in the Danville area of Virginia, and floated down the river to Williamston, where the freight was loaded onto larger boats for delivery to ships going across the ocean. A canal around the falls and rapids in upper North Carolina made possible the water route from Virginia to the sea.

Linking of the Roanoke and Pamlico Rivers by a canal was mentioned at the annual stockholders' meeting of the Roanoke Navigation Company in December, 1824, according to an item in the Halifax Free Press, a newspaper that was later to become the Tarboro Southerner. It was proposed to build the canal between Williamston and Washington, according to the report, but there is no further mention of such a plan in any other records, so it must not have been given any serious consideration.

The Roanoke Navigation Company apparently did not keep up with transportation demands, and other firms and individuals were blocked by the monopoly in their efforts to improve commerce on the river. According to a story in the Raleigh News in March, 1875, an act passed both houses of the General Assembly in that session directing the attorney general to bring action for dissolution of the monopoly. In its article about the unused potential of the upper reaches of the Roanoke, the News said, "The magnificent water power at Weldon, which obtrudes its unused capacities upon the eye of wondering thousands, has vainly clamored to be put to use. Not a wheel is in motion where hundreds might be urging into action tens of thousands of spindles and looms to convert into fabrics of trade the raw material grown along the very banks of the rivers. The upper waters of the Roanoke and the Dan, unemployed by this company, offer many stretches where navigation is so easy as to have invited private enterprise. But this company, using nothing itself and doing nothing, with a dog-in-the-manger policy, snaps at every intruder and crushes him in the machinery of the law—using the power it possesses only for oppression or the selfish maintenance of its unused rights."

Apparently the movement succeeded, for several companies were formed shortly afterwards to provide freight and passenger service by boats along the river. A considerable number of boats were in service on the lower stretches of the river—from Hamilton to the mouth—during the early and middle portion of the 19th century, so it may be possible that the monopolistic practices of the Roanoke Navigation Company did not apply to this portion of the river, or those boats using the lower portion of the river may have paid water rents or tolls to the company.

The William Slade papers, now in Duke University Library in Durham, include shipping bills showing that at least two schooners were operating on the Roanoke River in 1835. One, dated March 3, 1835, was issued for a shipment on the schooner, "Windsor," bound for New York; the other is dated September 3, 1835, and refers to the schooner "Little Handsome," no other information being recorded. Still another bill among the Slade papers is dated September 17, 1850, and concerns a shipment on the schooner "Mary Adeline," bound for Williamston from New York.

Among the Bryant Bennett papers, also in Duke University Library, is a freight bill, dated April 16, 1852, for a shipment of 38,600 30-inch shingles and 21,800 24-inch shingles on the schooner "Charles S. Ford," loaded in Hamilton and bound for Philadelphia. Among these same papers is a legal instrument relating to a shipment of 7,920 bushels of corn on the ship "Carraway", then owned by Bryant Bennett, from Hamilton to Norfolk. Also in the papers is a letter dated about a year later, December 30, 1853, showing that the ship "Carraway" was then owned by a Mr. Ward, no address being given.

The record is not complete, but it is known that more than 65 vessels of various sizes and types operated on the Roanoke River at one time or another between 1835 and the start of World War II, when most boats then in use were taken over by the government. This figure does not include a number of tugs and barges serving the fertilizer plant at Williamston from the late 1920's to the present, as well as a substantial number of oil tankers, timber, pulpwood, and like barges and tugs used on the river in recent years. The list includes at least 15 schooners, or sailing vessels, used mostly around the middle of the last century; steamers of assorted sizes and types, including side-wheelers, sternwheelers, propeller-driven boats, motor ships, and several unclassified except as "river boats;" and also one showboat, the latter making occasional visits up to the 1940's.

Following is a list which, although probably not complete, includes the names of most of the vessels that visited Jamesville, Williamston, or Hamilton, the three main county river ports, at one time or another during the past 150 years, with the approximate years they were in service where known:

River boats "Sally Norfleet," 1836, and "Tuscarora," 1850-53, the latter possibly owned by John C. Gorham, a Palmyra merchant; schooners "Windsor" and "Little Handsome," 1835; "William R. Smith," "Mary Mariah," "Conquest," all three 1840; "Harriet Smith," 1841; "Amanda Ophelia," 1848; "Mary Adeline," 1850; "Charles S. Ford," 1852; "Cora Manley," "Monte Christo," both 1856; "Mary Eliza," "Abigail Jennings," "Sophia Collins," all three 1859; and "Pattie Martin," 1862; "Caledonia," and "Stag," both 1857;

Steamboats: "Conestoga," 1847; "George Henry," "Lopen," 1848; "Carraway," 1852-53; "Martha Moore," 1855; "Liberty," 1856-57, burned at Plymouth in 1857; "Cecil," 1857; "Canada," 1858; "John Styles," 1857-1861, no report of activities of this boat after the start of the Civil War; "Cotton Plant," 1862; "Albemarle," Confederate Ram, built in Halifax County during the Civil War, stopped briefly in Williamston on the way to Plymouth in the spring of 1864, later sunk by a torpedo at dock in Plymouth in the autumn of the same year; "Sea Go," a federal commercial ship, sunk just below Jamesville during the war, a portion of the wreck being found in that area in 1972; "Chickapoo," also a federal commercial boat, sunk during the war near Hyman's Ferry between Jamesville and Plymouth;

Also steamers "Orient," 1866; "L. D. Cannon," 1869; "Astoria," 1870; "Louisa," 1872; "Hamilton," 1877 (this boat or another by the same name, owned and operated by Norfolk Southern Railway Company between Edenton and Roanoke River towns, was sunk in February, 1917, between Hamilton and Williamston near the mouth of Conoho Creek); a page from an 1877 diary says the following steamers were plying the waters of the Roanoke in that year: "Commerce," "Henry C. Wagner," "Vesta," Fairchild," "Meteor," "Oriole," "Juanita," plus some of those previously listed; the same diary says the "L. D. Cannon" was the fastest, the "Henry G. Wagner" and the "Rotary" were the slowest, and the "Meteor" was the largest;

Also steamers "Media," "Lucy," and "McCall," the latter a side-wheeler, the years when they were on the river not determined; about 1880 two small steamers, "Susie Hitch" and "Harry", were operated out of Hamilton by Frank Hitch, sawmill owner and operator of the railroad from Hamilton to Tarboro; "Ranger," 1880-1890, burned the latter year in the river; "Long Branch," 1886-87, burned at her wharf during a big fire in Williamston in 1886 or 1887; "Petit," which made its last trip on the river in 1903; "Julius S. Taylor," "Croatan," and "Mayflower," 1901; "Leona," "Belva," and "Alicia," 1903; "Olive," 1882; "Lucy," 1897.

From its southern terminal at Edenton, the Norfolk Southern Railroad Company operated at least five steam packets to the three county towns on the Roanoke River at various times between 1886 and 1917, including "Plymouth," "Ranger," "Hamilton," "Haven Belle," and "Mary E. Roberts." Another line to operate a number of freight boats between county towns and Norfolk, Va., was the Norfolk, Baltimore, and Carolina Boat Line, which began its service in 1923 and continued until the vessels were taken over and put into government service at the start of World War II. C. D. Carstarphen was agent for the line at Williamston until his death, being succeeded by W. A. "Fatty" Knox. A few special runs were made up the Roanoke River after the line's ships were pressed into government service, but they were infrequent, the end of scheduled service coming in the early forties.

In addition to the freight and passenger vessels that used the Roanoke waterway throughout the early history of the county, a sizable number of federal warships were frequently up and down it during the Civil War, although there are few records of their names. The "Miami," "Sassacus," and "Southfield" were among them, but there were others. They were careful not to go upriver as far as Rainbow Banks after Fort Branch was fortified, until after the fort was abandoned and the guns were thrown into the river by a federal raiding party.

Traffic on the river prior to the organization of the Roanoke Steamboat Company in 1856 is somewhat puzzling. It is known that some fairly large sailing ships came up to Williamston before that time, but how they managed to navigate the relatively narrow and crooked stream without some form of auxiliary power is difficult to understand. After the Roanoke Steamboat Company was organized, there is mention of its steamer, the "Liberty," towing sailing vessels up the river as far as Williamston for a fee, and it is possible that others may have done so prior to that time, but there is no record of this. Some of the sailing schooners that came up the river were large enough to be engaged in commerce with the British West Indies.

First mention of the Roanoke Steamboat Company is contained in the diary of Doctor Warren Bagley of Williamston, a leading merchant and a true patriot, under date of November 8, 1856. On that date a group of citizens, mostly from Williamston and Hamilton, met in the county courthouse and subscribed sufficient stock to purchase the steamer "Liberty" from John W. Keeling, a Suffolk, Va., man who was also master of the vessel. T. B. Nichols of Plymouth presided at the meeting and Jos. J. Martin was secretary. Later that day, with the Hon. Asa Biggs presiding, Bagley was elected president without a fixed salary, and Henry Williams and L. L. Clements were elected directors.

A detailed bill of sale is included in the record, showing the price of the vessel to be $13,500. The "Liberty," built in Baltimore, in 1839, was 85 feet 6 inches in length, 22 feet wide, and had a depth of 9 feet. It was of 150.59 tons capacity.

Stockholders and number of shares valued at $100 each were as follows: John W. Keeling, from whom the ship was bought, retained 36½ shares; Gilbert L. Moore, 10; John D. Perry, 5; D. W. Bagley, 2; Henry Williams, 5; Miss Hannah Clements, 2½; Asa Biggs, 5; William T. Crawford, 1½; William J. Ellison, 2; J. Latham, 3; Henry S. Lloyd, 4; F. W. Moore, 3; William C. Ebron, 3; Henry P. Gibson, 1½; Waldo & Clements, 2½; Whitaker, Weathersbee & Co., 2; John J. Cloman, 2; and the following, one each; William Watts, A. F. Leggett, Samuel C. Whitley, William W. Watts, Joseph J. Martin, L. Thrower, George M. Burras, James A. Melson, James S. Williams, William W. Ward, A. C. Williams, Joseph H. Barnett, L. L. Clements, William Brown, Calvin Boyd, B. C. Mayo, W. A. Bonner, H. L. Sherrod, W. R. Hyman, Jesse Everett, W. R. W. Sherrod, Waldo & Bell, M. C. Cherry, M. R. Smith, Lowe & Sherrod, Daniels & Waldo, Levi Howell, J. W. Sherrod, Bryant Bennett, B. D. Howell, Anthony & Ward, J. J. Anthony, John D. Williams, H. S. Williams, S. A. O'Daniels, Godwin & Morrisette, J. J. Ward, J. D. Groves, S. T. Price, Wm. C. Rogers, and James H. Lloyd.

The company moved swiftly into operation, Mr. Bagley stating in his diary that W. J. Ellison, McG. M. Staton, and J. S. Yarrell were appointed by the Martin County Court on November 11, 1856, to build a steamboat wharf below the county wharf, as well as necessary houses and sheds, and to improve the road from the wharf to high land. When placed in operation, the steamer was commanded and handled by the following, the salary per month being set out by each name: Joseph G. Godfrey, captian, $50; John Weaver, engineer, $50; A. G. Woodley, pilot, $25; and the following hands: Edmund Smith, $15; William Porter, $15; Adolphuss Closs, $8; Lamb, $20; Willis, $15; and John, $15.

The exact date when the "Liberty" began running is not mentioned, but Mr. Bagley, the president, started having troubles almost immediately. On December 8, 1856, he called for a meting of stockholders and, although there were sufficient stockholders in town, at no time could a majority be secured to hold a meeting. His troubles began multiplying on December 18, when Captain Godfrey was "fired" and James A. Melson was named captain at $45 a month plus "use of the bar." The president, acting with the approval of Directors Williams and Clements, explained that Captain Godfrey had met with several accidents, causing the public to lose confidence in the company.

Captain Godfrey, after a trip to Baltimore, returned December 23 and asked for a meeting with the shareholders, and one was arranged for January 2, 1857. The shareholders adopted two resolutions, one approving the action of the president in discharging the captain, the other reinstating the captain. Mr. Bagley offered his resignation, but the stockholders would not accept it, prevailing upon him to remain as head of the company.

The company and the ill-fated steamer continued to have their troubles. The late winter of 1857 was one of the most severe on record. The river froze over, and the boat was unable to carry out the terms of the mail contract; on several occasions it was necessary to send the mail by land. On February 3, after being tied up at Plymouth since January 16, the "Liberty" started upriver, but was stopped near Jamesville by fields of ice. It was not until February 7 that mail schedules could be resumed by the boat. The company was facing financial difficulties, payments being due on February 9 totaling $1,251.53, while income for the period was only $982.94, not to mention the cost of having the mail delivered by land during the bad weather and other unexpected expenses. The company was about to be sued for infringing on passenger rights from Hamilton to Palmyra, and it relinquished mail contracts between the two towns. The stockholders were advised to have the vessel redesigned to increase its speed.

The president wanted to resign but could not. Two of the stockholders sold their shares. Custom house fees were due, and an inspection of the steamer was ordered by federal authorities. The vessel was found in good shape, but its operations were restricted to Albemarle Sound and its tributaries.

Little more is said about the "Liberty" and its operation until April 15, 1857, when President Bagley entered the following: "Wednesday, the 15th of April, the steamer 'Liberty' was burned while lying at the wharf in Plymouth between 9 and 10 o'clock p.m., having been there some five or more hours, the fires put out and cool." On hand when the steamer burned were Capt. Joseph G. Godfrey; Engineer Julius Hanks; Pilots James H. Lloyd and Jack Picot; Firemen Lamb, Willis, and Isaac; and Jane, the maid and cook.

Some investigations were conducted, but nothing out of line was ever discovered. Mr. Bagley continued his scrambles to have the mail contracts fulfilled; and finally, on June 15, 1857, a quorum was secured for a stockholders' meeting to help bring the affairs of the company to a close. Asa Biggs was appointed chairman and C. B. Hassell, secretary. All monies due from the mail contract were ordered turned over to D. W. Bagley for his services in handling the mails and $300 for his trials and tribulations as president. The hull of the burned vessel was to be turned over to Mr. Keeling for the balance due; and if that settlement was not satisfactory, the remains of the boat were to be sold at public auction and the stockholders assessed for any balance due. There is no record of the outcome, but Mr. Bagley was sued in 1860 and forced to pay several claims against the defunct company amounting to more than the sum paid to him at the final meeting of the stockholders.

At the final meeting of stockholders of the Roanoke Steamboat Company on June 15, 1857, to close out affairs of the concern, there was a discussion about buying another boat to operate on the river, but only about $1,800 was subscribed, according to an entry in the diary of Elder C. B. Hassell on that date. He stated, however, that another meeting was held June 27, that year, when stock amounting to about $7,000 was subscribed. A new company, the Roanoke Steam Navigation Company, was organized, and it continued to operate successfully until the Civil War.

Plymouth was a port of entry at the time the new company was organized on June 27, 1857, and Joseph a. Ramsey, collector of customs there, was elected president, provided it was not against regulations of the Custom Service for him to serve, in which event C. B. Hassell was to be president. L. L. Clements of Hamilton and F. W. Moore of Williamston were elected directors. D. W. Bagley was named to receive the funds subscribed and deliver them to Ramsey, who was delegated to go to Baltimore or elsewhere and buy a boat if one could be secured for $7,000 or less.

On June 30, it was learned that Ramsey could not serve and Elder Hassell became president, making plans to leave immediately for Baltimore to seek a boat for the company. Hassell and an engineer from Plymouth, Edgar Hanks, left the next day, July 1, and traveled to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York in search of a steamboat, but were unable to find one they liked for a price the company could afford to pay. They returned home July 13 and made a full report of their fruitless search to a meeting of the stockholders held in the courthouse at Williamston. Hassell was re-elected president for a six-month term from that date and the capital stock was increased to about $9,000. He was instructed to sell as much additional stock as he could until August 1st and then to purchase the best boat he could secure for the amount of money available.

Hassell and two engineers from Plymouth, Edgar and Junius Hanks, went to New York in August and on the 13th succeeded in purchasing the steamer "John Styles" from Jonas Smith for $13,712.50. Hassell had some difficulty in completing the purchase, since the letter of credit he had obtained from a bank in Windsor was not negotiable in New York. He finally paid Smith $5,000 in cash and signed papers to pay the balance in 90 days. Hassell started back home the same day, leaving the two Hanks and Captain Brown to have the boat outfitted and brought to North Carolina.

According to the Hassell diary, the "John Styles" arrived at Plymouth about a month later, on September 17, 1857, and on the 19th Elder Hassell, his wife, and five children boarded the steamer in Williamston, along with a number of others, for a trip to Hamilton. They returned on the 21st, but Hassell and three of his children, along with about 100 others, continued on to Plymouth. He noted that the excursion was free, and on September 22 he wrote "Steamer's praise in everyone's mouth...."

Acting for the company, Elder Hassell on November 9, 1857, made a deal with John Neal of Washington to connect Neal's stage line with the steamer "John Styles" at Plymouth, service to begin that day. At a stockholders' meeting on January 8, 1858, he made a complete report on the purchase, cost, business and management of the vessel, showing the exact condition of the company to that date. The boat had earned, clear of expenses, about $1,400 in the four-month period, and the probability was, he wrote, "to reduce her indebtedness to a mere trifle in 12 months more."

The optimistic outlook expressed by the president was not realized, however. At the semi-annual meeting of stockholders on July 1, 1858, he was reelected president for six months, with W. B. Nichols, Henry Williams, and L. L. Clements being elected directors for the same period. Hassell's report stated that the steamer "John Styles" was in debt about $6,000, having funded only about $1,400 since she commenced work on the Roanoke about September 21, 1857. At the next meeting of the stockholders, January 18, 1859, the same officers and directors were reelected for the ensuing six months. A December 31, 1858, entry in the Hassell diary says the steamer, in addition to her other crew, carried a cook and a chambermaid.

The next semi-annual meeting of the stockholders, on July 26, 1859, with 76 of the 100 shares of stock represented, made a change in the previous policy of the company. The office of president was abolished, and a captain was elected to handle all the business of the company, supervised by a board of directors composed of one representative each from Hamilton, Williamston, Jamesville, and Plymouth. Friley W. Moore of Williamston was elected captain; L. L. Clements, Henry Williams, Dennis Simmons, and Henry B. Short, directors. Hassell made his final report as president for the previous six months and received a vote of thanks from the directors. He turned over the books and records of the company to Captain Moore and was relieved of any further responsibility for them in the presence of Joseph D. Biggs and Anson J. Mizell. Only two more entries appear in the Hassell diary about the steamer "John Styles." On February 1, 1860, the same officers and directors were reelected for a year, and the captain's salary was fixed at $1,000 per year. Then on February 1, 1861, it is recorded that Hassell attended "at his store a meeting of the Roanoke Steam Navigation Company. It was agreed to continue the 'John Styles' on the river and employ F. W. Moore as captain for the current year."

No further records concerning the Roanoke Steam Navigation Company have been located, the next reference to a locally owned and operated boat line coming some years after the war, in 1878, when the Roanoke River Transportation Company was organized. It was extremely successful at first and its prospects were very bright until a warehouse fire less than two years later just about wiped it out.

The Roanoke River Transportation Company was organized March 29, 1878, in Hamilton by a number of business firms and individuals from various parts of Martin County. Subscriptions for $4,800 in capital stock were received on that date, and a steamer, "Rotary," was purchased shortly afterwards to run from Norfolk to Hill's Ferry in this county. Stockholders and amount of stock issued were as follows: Everett & Barnhill, H. Brown & Co., John D. Biggs & Co., W. E. Hudgins, $500 each; Dr. D. W. Lewis, Dr. L.

C. Coke, S. H. McRae, $300 each; C. B. Hassell, $200; Joseph T. Waldo, George E. Brown, B. L. Long, W. T. Whitehead, William Hodges; Josh L. Ewell, George O. Roberson, H. D. Roberson & Son, Dr. L. D. Knight, M. T. Savage, N. S. Godard, B. F. Godwin, John W. Thomas, Theo Keel, John P. Rascoe (Bertie County), Walter Hassell, and S. R. Biggs, $100 each. On May 2, 1878, the stockholders met in Hamilton and unanimously elected the following officers: Dennis Simmons, president; John D. Biggs, treasurer; Robert H. Everett, secretary; W. T. Whitehead, William Hodges, H. Brown, H. D. Roberson, J. L. Ewell, W. E. Hudgins, and John P. Rascoe, directors.

Later that same month, on May 28, Elder Hassell wrote in his diary about a trip to Hamilton with Dennis Simmons, N. S. Godard, J. L. Ewell, and William J. Hardison, to attend a stockholders' meeting. At the meeting the capital stock was increased from $5,000 to $15,000, and the president was authorized to purchase another steamer at a cost of not more than $10,000. Hassell was made agent for the boat line at Williamston.

Books for the sale of additional stock were opened in Palmyra, Hamilton, Robersonville, and Williamston, and the following new names were added to the list of stockholders: J. Hoffman, W. H. Gilakin, George W. Williams, J. M. Sitterson, N. S. peel & Bro., George L. Whitley, Hiran Wisenfield, Deny D. Fridenwald, Edward R. Harrell, and Sarah F. Biggs. Most of the old stockholders also subscribed for additional stock, John D. Biggs & Company buying another $1,800 worth.

The next meeting of the stockholders was held October 3, 1878, in Hamilton, where the steamer "Astoria" had been received. A dividend of 57⅔ per cent was declared, minutes of the meeting showing that the profits had been made on operations of the steamer "Rotary."

An annual meeting of stockholders was held in Hamilton april 10, 1879, and the same officers were reelected, the following being named as directors: William Hodges, H. Brown, D. W. Lewis, H. D. Roberson, J. L. Ewell, C. B. Hassell and R. R. Owen. A motion was passed allowing boat captains to carry passengers free, provided the action would build good will for the company. It was stipulated that passengers were to pay for their meals. R. R. Tillery of Halifax County proposed to borrow $2,000 from the company to assist him in building a tramroad from Scotland Neck to Hill's Ferry. No action was taken at the time, and adversities experienced later by the steamboat company blocked the loan.

The company declared a 25 per cent dividend on April 16, 1879, and the directors made tentative plans for purchasing a light-draft steamer to run on the upper portion of the Roanoke. Dennis Simmons was named to investigate the plan. Then on July 16, 1879, the capital stock was increased by $2,100, the company showing a substantial growth and an expanding business. Noah Biggs was named to succeed H. D. Roberson as director. The additional stock was sold to: Romulus C. Hawkins, $600; R. B. Salsbury, Jerome Price, Noah Biggs, $500 each; J. Albert White, James G. Shields, R. W. Johnson, B. D. Gray, and D. D. Simmons, $100 each.

Things were going very well for the young company until disaster struck on November 20, 1879, when a warehouse burned at Edwards Ferry and destroyed 97 bales of cotton belonging to N. B. Josey & Co., R. C. Hawkins, Noah Biggs & Co., W. H. Kitchin, J. G. Shields, Kitchin & Rothschild, W. Allsbrook, T. C. Nichols, W. C. Whitehead, C. T. Lawrence, Susan Smith, B. Allsbrook, J. R. Ballard, M. Hoffman, Hawkins & Johnson, and J. B. Neal. Meeting in the town hall at Hamilton December 28, 1879, the stockholders named a committee, composed of R. B. Salsbury, D. W. Lewis, John D. Biggs, R. R. Owen, and Theo Keel, to try to work out a settlement with the owners of the cotton.

The committee reported that full payment of 11 cents a pound had been demanded. After questioning Eli Biggs, agent for the company at Edwards Ferry, and Capt. R. W. Thomas of the steamer "Vesta", the stockholders maintained that the fire was an accident over which they had no control and they were not responsible for the loss. However, "to be fair to patrons and maintain good will," the company agreed to pay 50 per cent of the loss in cash. The matter was left to arbitration, and the claims were settled on March 4, 1880. They were settled out of court, W. H. Shields and R. H. Smith representing the cotton owners and John D. Biggs, Dr. L. C. Coke, and Capt. W. D. Hudgins representing the company. Details of the settlement were not made public.

The fire just about wrecked the company, and at the March 4 meeting it was voted to sell all the steamers and barges to the Baltimore, Norfolk & Roanoke River Transportation Company. The directors also voted to assess stockholders 25 per cent on their stock, with payment to be made within 30 days. The final entry in the scant records was made at a meeting in Williamston on Wednesday, June 9, 1880, when the books were examined, found in order, and ordered to be closed out, marking the end of another transportation venture on the Roanoke River.

In addition to records of the several shipping companies organized by county people and firms during the past century, a number of notes about river boats and ships have been collected from various scattered sources, including entries in diaries, waybills, receipts, statements, and the like. Individually, some of them mean little, but collectively they give some understanding of the life and times, as well as commerce, along the Roanoke River over the years.

For instance, there is a receipted statement, issued by Wm. M. Peck & Company in New York on March 24, 1830, in the total amount of $16.50, for freight of $15.50 on one mahogany half circle top bedstead and $1 for a year's subscription to the "N. Y. Amulet." Name of the consignee is not to be found. Then there is a receipt, dated March 26, 1836, from John Cox, reading as follows: "Received from Messrs. Hassell & Williams their note for $500, dated March 21, 1836, payable in six months from the 1st day of April next for a River Boat called 'Sally Norfleet,' which said boat I am to deliver as soon (after its arrival at Plymouth) as practicable to them in Williamston."

Elder C.B. Hassell was involved in a number of the scattered items, many of them being receipts for freight handled by the various ships and boats. On April 13, 1840, Capt. Eleazer Johnston of the schooner "Mary Mariah" settled with C.B. Hassel for freight on salt from Turk Island "and all other matters connected with the outward and inward bound cargo of said vessel." Captain George R. Clements of the schooner "Wm. R. Smith," on April 15, 1840, receipted a bill to C.B. Hassell in the amount of $108.71 for freight on 1,272 bushels of salt from the schooner "Mary Mariah" near Ocracoke Bar to Williamston. On the same date, April 15, 1840, C.B. Hassell paid Bryan Maittland $186.22 for freight handled on the schooner "Conquest," including $75 for 150 bushels of salt and $68 on five barrels of whiskey, the receipt being signed by W. Hoell. The schooner "George Henry" arrived from New York on September 12, 1848, with some flour for C.B. Hassell. He noted that "She came in six days from the city."

Bryan Maittland, in correspondence with C. B. Hassell on April 13, 1841, mentioned the schooner "Harriet Smith," of which Daniel Smith was Master. Capt. John Podger of the schooner "Amanda Ophellia" signed a receipt in the amount of $30.92 on April 6, 1848, for freight on goods shipped to C.B. Hassell. On

May 2, 1848, C. B. Hassell paid Capt. Wm. M. Betts of the steamer "Lopen"' $12.33 as freight on 600 pounds of sugar, two bags of coffee, one box of tobacco, 170 castings, and two boxes of miscellaneous products. Writing from Baltimore on August 16, 1872, C.B. Hassell told S. Romulus Biggs, Sr., of changes in freight schedules. He also said Captain Walker of the steamer "Commerce" had refused to accept a freight shipment from him because Hassell had previously shipped 23 barrels of flour on the steamer "Louisa," a competing boat. Hassell also mentioned the steamer "Astoria," a boat operated by the Roanoke River Transportation Company, in the same letter. The "Commerce" referred to, while docked at the Williamston wharf, was burned the same night when much of the business district of the town was destroyed by fire in 1883.

On page 156 of the state comptroller's statement for 1861-62 there is an item in public fund disbursements, January, 1862, as follows: Dennis Simmons, for transportation services of schooner "Pattie Morris," $379. Messrs. Hassell & Carstarphen, trustees for J.H. Rhodes & Brother, paid Capt. A.M. Walker of the steamer "Louisa" $7 for towing canoes from swamp to Conoho and 50 cents for freight on five wheelbarrows, the receipt being dated September 24, 1877. C.B. Hassell noted in his diary on February 22, 1878, that the steamers "Cannon," "Astoria" and "Louisa" were still operating on the Roanoke at that time.

The schooner "Monte Christo" arrived in Williamston on August 14, 1856, bringing salt herring and mackeral from New York. At that time Lisbon salt was priced at 40 cents a bushel. "Mary Eliza," a schooner, delivered 200 barrels of salt herring to Williams & Lamb, Williamston merchants, on March 8, 1859. Then on March 17, 1859, the schooner "Abigail Jennings" delivered 15 barrels of pork and one hogshead of bacon hams to Williams & Lamb. Another shipment came to Williams & Lamb in April, 1859, by the schooner "Sophia Collins," this one consisting of 36 hogsheads of prime English Island Molasses. At that time the West Indian molasses sold for 35 cents a gallon in barrels and 32½ cents per gallon in hogsheads.

Some additional items from the diary of Elder C.B. Hassell include the information that the steamboat "Conestoga" arrived in Williamston on February 2, 1847, and delivered some goods. On April 17, 1848, he wrote, "A canal boat belonging to a Mr. Anthony perhaps had sunk just above Herring Gut with about 700 barrels of corn and other property. No prospect of saving the cargo." On

July 15, 1847, Hassell attended a meeting of the "Landing Commissioners" and agreed with them that his two warehouses at the Williamston landing should be kept as storage houses only and not rented out or used as retail outlets. Since they were located on public land, it was expected that they could be used as a reasonable storage accommodation for the public; and it was agreed that he would be privileged to remove the houses from the public landing if he became dissatisfied with the terms. On March 26, 1856, Mr. Hassell noted that he presided at a meeting of citizens to discuss a proposed change in the steamboat and stage lines by having them connect at Williamston instead of Plymouth. Hon. Asa Biggs had informed the postmaster that the department had ordered the change to be made. A committee of eight was appointed to determine what facilities would be necessary for mail contractors of the steamboat and stage lines. Hassell's diary also mentions that early in the Civil War, in February, 1862, the steamer "Cotton Plant" was used on the Roanoke River to bring refugees, mostly women and children, from Plymouth to Williamston after the fall of Hatteras Island to the federal forces. Plans for the evacuation were made in the office of Dr. Pugh in Williamston.

The steamer "Sadie A. McCall," a side-wheeler, was put into operation from Edenton to Williamston on December 2, 1875, carrying both freight and passengers, and making the trip in about four hours. Running about two hours earlier than the "Plymouth," a steam packet, the "McCall," operated by the Norfolk Southern Railway over the same route, made close connections with railroad trains at Jamesville [J. & W. R.R. Co.]. Captain Raybold was master and W.M. Lutely was purser.

Quite a number of ships and boats have been lost for various reasons in the Roanoke over the past hundred or so years. A canal boat belonging to a Mr. Anthony was sunk near the mouth of Herring Gut in April, 1847, with a loss of 700 barrels of corn and other property. The steamer "Liberty," owned by the Roanoke Steamboat Company, burned at Plymouth on April 15, 1857. In July, 1932, Capt. R.G. Compstock of the U.S. Rivers and Harbors Engineering Service, was in the county investigating old shipwrecks in the river. He said that four vessels were sunk in the river during the Civil War, not counting two war vessels—the Confederate ram "Albemarle" and the U. S. S. "Southfield"'both of which were lost in 1864 at or near the docks in Plymouth. The "Albemarle" rammed and sank the "Southfield" and was in turn blown up by a torpedo at its berth on the Plymouth waterfront.

According to Captain Comstock, the "Sea Go," a federal commercial boat, was sunk just below Jamesville; and a side-wheeler used in blockade running, name unknown, went to the bottom some distance below Jamesville, as did the other two vessels. A portion of a wreck, believed to have been the "Sea Go", was found in that area in 1972.

The steamer "Commerce," docked at Williamston, was burned the same night that much of the business district of Williamston was destroyed by fire in 1883. Another steamer, the "Long Branch," was burned in like manner during a big fire in Williamston in either 1886 or 1887. Two other river boats also burned on the river, but dates and details are not known. They were the "Ranger," which was operated on the river between 1880 and 1890 by the Norfolk Southern Railroad Company, and the "Chicapoo," owner or master not known. Part of the hull of a burned-out river steamer was found in the Roanoke in late September, 1973, by Billy Scott of Hobgood. About 65 feet in length, it was located near Hamilton. Little has been learned about the old wreck, except that it apparently was not a warship. There is also a report that a tugboat "belonging to the government was sunk in the river near Poplar Point Landing in late July, 1890." It was noted that the loss was not great.

The steamer "Hamilton," owned and operated by the Norfolk Southern Railroad Company between Edenton and Roanoke River points, sank in the latter part of February, 1917, in the Roanoke River between Hamilton and Williamston near the mouth of Coniock Creek. All 18 members of the crew were saved with the exception of the cook, who, against advice of Captain W. J. Overton, went back to her cabin for clothing and went down with the boat. Surviving members of the crew were brought to Williamston and went by train to Edenton, via Plymouth. Arrangements were made by Anderson, Crawford & Company, agents for the Norfolk Southern in Williamston. The "Hamilton," valued at $35,000, was carrying 2,000 bags of fertilizer and other cargo to Hamilton when the propeller struck a log and drove it through the bottom, causing the 800-ton ship to sink before the crew could launch a lifeboat. Built about 1892, the boat rapidly disintegrated after the wreck and was never raised.

The sinking of the "Hamilton" marked the virtual end of the regular steamboat schedules which had been maintained by the Norfolk Southern between Edenton and Roanoke River points since October, 1886. The service began with the steamers "Plymouth" and "Ranger" making rail connections with the Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad at Williamston, and the Jamesville & Washington Railroad at Jamesville, and serving points on the Cashie and Roanoke Rivers. They also made connections at Edenton with boats for practically all the other rivers in northeastern North Carolina, including the Chowan, Scuppernong, Little, Pasquotank, North, and Alligator. The "Plymouth" left Williamston at 5 a.m. for Edenton daily except Sunday, returning after the arrival of the train from Norfolk at Edenton. The "Ranger" left Williamston on Mondays and Thursdays for all landings up to Bridgers Ferry. Freight was received and delivered from and to the steamers at the Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad warehouse on the Roanoke River, near where the fertilizer plant is now located in Williamston. W. A. Ellison was the agent for both transportation companies.

There was an advertisement of the Roanoke, Norfolk & Baltimore Steamboat Company in the Tarboro Southerner on March 23, 1883, announcing that a passenger steamer of that company left Williamston daily at 9 p.m., connecting at Jamesville with the Jamesville & Washington Railroad, and at Edenton with the Norfolk Southern Railroad for all points north. In the same advertisement the company said it had two steamers, "Meteor" and "Conoho," making regular trips from 15 McDonnell's Wharf, Baltimore, Md., connecting at Williamston, N. C., with the Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad for Everetts, Robersonville, Bethel, and Tarboro, N. C. W. H. Carstarphen was agent for the company at Williamston.

There was a brief item in the Williamston Enterprise on March 14, 1901, as follows: "The steamers 'Julius S. Taylor' and 'Croatan' were at the dock (Williamston) Saturday (March 8, 1901)." Capt. T. W. Tillery was said to be operating Tillery's Roanoke River Line to connect with the Norfolk & Southern Railroad in Edenton in early May, 1904. The Petersburg, Norfolk & Weldon Steamboat Company was merged with it about that time, and the consolidated operation was placed under the management of Captain Tillery, who had been navigating the Roanoke River for about 15 years.

During the past century, northern interests on numerous occasions chartered vessels to come up the Roanoke and pick up loads of the hand-made shingles for which the region was noted. Later, in the current century, a number of oil companies used the

Roanoke to bring in supplies to their terminals, several being located on the river at Williamston. By 1974, all of them, except the Texas Company, had switched to tanker trucks operating out of larger terminals served by pipelines or ships. Lumber and pulp mills are now operating their own private tugs and barges to carry timber and pulpwood to their plants, the Weyerhaeuser Company at Plymouth and Union Camp Manufacturing Company at Franklin, Va., being two of the main operators in this category. Once a familiar sight, only occasionally is a raft of logs to be seen floating down the stream.

The Norfolk, Baltimore & Carolina Line of Norfolk, Va., was the last company to operate freight lines on a regular schedule on the Roanoke, beginning their service May 21, 1923. Their steamer "Clytie" inaugurated the all-water servce, making two trips a week, leaving Norfolk every Monday and Thursday at 6 p.m., and due in Williamston every Wednesday and Saturday at 7 a.m. She would then leave Williamston as soon as the cargo was discharged and return freight loaded. The line continued and expanded, other river boats used including "Albemarle," "Dorothy Leigh," an "Emblane," until the start of World War II, when the government took over some of the line's vessels, and the service was gradually discontinued. Captain George Wise and Captain Barnes were masters of the line's river boats during the 18 years of operation.

The last boat used for the Roanoke River run, "Emblane," had an interesting history. It was originally built as a yacht tender for the very wealthy New York financier, J. P. Morgan, and was taken over by the federal government in World War I for use as a submarine tender. After the war, L. G. Hogshire, president of the N.B. & C. Line, bought the boat and converted it into a freighter for use on the run between Norfolk and Williamston. When World War II started, the "Emblane" was again pressed into government service and regular freight service on the Roanoke was discontinued. A few special runs were made by the line's other boats up the river after that, but scheduled service was never restored.

There has been some shipbuilding along the banks of the Roanoke, both in the early days and even up to this time. The Indians, of course, were the pioneers with their dug-outs. Using crude tools and fire, they hollowed out the large cypress logs to make tricky but serviceable means of transportation on the water. Called "canoes," they were popular with early white residents of the area also, and hundreds of them were in use along the lower part of the Roanoke up to around fifty years ago. The canoe was not a craft for the novice, as it would tip at the slightest shift of weight, but for those familiar with them, they were easy to paddle and handle on the streams of the section.

Probably some of the most unusual craft to be seen on the river were the so-called "fishing machines," which were in operation during the early part of this century. Each machine was comprised of two flatboats, linked together by a long wooden axle on which was mounted a bow scoop net made usually of poultry wire. Around the axle were wooden paddles, actuated by the current, which kept the net going around in a dipping motion. As the fish, mostly herring, were scooped up, they would be channeled by a V-trough at the bottom into the flat boats at each side. The number of paddles would be determined by the speed of the current and size of the fish run. If the dips were made too frequently during heavy runs, the weight of the fish would sink the flatboats, and the entire catch would be lost unless attended almost constantly. The machines would be anchored to trees along the shore at selected spots, and the best catches were usually made at night. It is said that the only two rivers where this type of fishing was ever done were the Roanoke River in the southeast and the Columbia River in Washington state in the northwest.

Several shipyards were in operation along the Roanoke prior to and during the Civil War. Elder C. B. Hassell, in his diary of March 20, 1855, had the following notation: "Gilbert L. Moore had launched this day above Williamston Landing a new vessel of about 150 tons burthen called 'Martha Moore'." The Confederate Ram "Albemarle" was constructed at Edwards' Ferry, near Palmyra, and a man named Gurkin operated a boat-building yard on the north shore a short distance above Williamston after the Civil War.

Back in the late 1600's and early 1700's, when the first settlers began moving into the territory that was to become Martin County, there were no roads in the accepted sense of the word. Travel was limited almost exclusively to rivers and streams; and if an overland trip was to be made, it was usually done by following Indian trails, paths from house to house, or blazed passages hacked out of the wilderness. There were no bridges and few ferries, and when a stream was reached, the traveler either forded it or swam across, except when it was narrow enough for a tree to be felled to provide a footlog. Sometimes it would be necessary to build log rafts to float goods and possessions across.

Post roads came into being in this section around 1735, when the first routes were established from Mackeys Ferry to Tarboro and Scotland Neck. Not much as roads are considered today, and impassible at times due to weather conditoins, they were nevertheless a decided improvement over what had existed before. They were entirely too scarce, however; an old 1818 map shows comparatively few roads in the county even at that time.

The post road provided a stagecoach route from Edenton to Tarboro. After crossing Albemarle Sound by ferry to Mackeys, the road came west, crossing Welch's Creek near the site of the present Ward's Bridge, following a course along Roanoke River through Jamesville, over Gardner's Creek near the present crossing and then to a spot near Holly Springs Methodist Church. Making almost a right-angle turn there, the road went on to Sweet Water (Smithwick's) creek, where a crossing was made at a place later known as Watt's Landing. The route then continued into Williamston through what was later known as the Watts farm and grove, crossing the town's main street about where the Professional Office Building is now located, going on over the property where the York home now stands on Simmons Avenue, through Woodlawn Cemetery, and into Poplar Point Township. Unofficial reports are that the stagecoaches and mail moved over the Ballard Road, across present Highway 125 at or about the Fred Roebuck farm, parallel to present Route 42, thence over to Route 44 and on into Tarboro. Another route was the one generally following present Highway 125 into Hamilton, thence along the River Road into Scotland Neck and, in due time, to Halifax.

First record of a bridge being bulit in the county is contained in a memorandum issued September 20, 1794, a little over 20 years after the county was founded in 1774, certifying that Edward Smithwick, Esq., William Smithwick, and Edmund Smithwick had built a bridge over Gardner's Creek, for which the commissioners had allowed them 160 pounds. The clerk was directed to pay them that amount, provided they warranted to keep the bridge in good repair for a period of seven years. The memorandum was signed by John Stewart, Ebenezer Smithwick, Stephen Fagan and David Carraway. That bridge evidently lasted for some 84 years, as the next reference to a bridge at that point is the following notation from minutes of a county commissioners' meeting on March 4, 1878: "Ordered by the commissioners that the mail driver be allowed 20 cents per day for carrying the U.S.

mail across Gardner's Creek until a bridge is rebuilt over the same."

Several ferries were in operation between Martin and Bertie Counties back in Colonial days, some of them continuing for many years thereafter. Hill's Ferry, in the upper part of the county, is mentioned quite frequently in early records, and Bishop Asbury had a notation in his journal about crossing the Roanoke at Taylor's Ferry, near Palmyra, on February 27, 1804. Hill's Ferry is shown on an old 1818 map. There very possibly were others, some in the lower parts of the county. However, at the turn of the present century there appeared to be no established route across the Roanoke. In October, 1901, a service was proposed, believed to be at Speller's Ferry, estimated cost being $200 for the ferry and $350 for a road. Some time later, it is known that Speller's Ferry was in operation, about six miles upriver from Williamston, and it continued to function until the Williamston causeway and bridge were opened in 1922.

In 1830 the Virginia Transport Company was organized and operated wagon trains to handle freight in a number of eastern North Carolina Counties. The Roanoke River afforded superior service for Martin County towns in existence at that time, however, and there is no available evidence that the wagon trains were ever used in this section. It was about this time that a stage line was operated between Williamston and Tarboro, reports showing that this route was the first to be improved in the area.

Proposals to build a road through the Roanoke River swamps from Williamston to the Bertie highlands were made at least twice during the early part of the last century, but nothing ever came of them. The first reference is in a notice in the Tarboro Free Press, dated November 20, 1833, and signed by Asa Biggs, secretary, reading: "The building of the Williamston and Windsor Turnpike Road, through the low grounds of Roanoke, three miles or more, will be let to the lowest bidder on the premises on Monday, 16th December, next. Further particulars made known on that day." Elder C. B. Hassell's diary next notes that a public meeting was held in Williamston December 7, 1848, to discuss the feasibility of building a turnpike road "between this place and the highlands of Bertie." Hassell was appointed one of three men—others not named—to draft a bill to incorporate a company authorized to construct such a road and forward it to the legislature for support. There is no further mention of it, so evidently the matter was dropped.

Sporadic attempts were made at various times during the nineteenth century to improve road conditions, but there was no continuity to the programs proposed, and really no great public demand for such improvements. The Civil War and reconstruction period which followed also limited the resources of the people, who were more concerned with ekeing out an existence in those troublous times than in improving methods of communication. In 1852, for instance, H. T. Clark of Tarboro proposed in the state Senate the construction of a plank road from Tarboro to Jamesville and even secured an appropriation for it. However, there is a no record that the project was ever started. An old newspaper about that time reported that arrangements were made on November 9, 1857, for operation of a stage from Washington to connect with the steamer "John Styles" at Williamston.

It was not until early in the twentieth century that the demand for better roads began to swell, coinciding with the invention and development of the automobile. The motor car simply is not designed to operate with any degree of efficiency in the mud, on rutted roads, or in fording streams. Although the automobile was not to make its appearance in any substantial numbers in Martin County until about the time of the First World War, people of the area joined with others throughout the nation in calling for the improved roads that would make the auto practical.

Starting in 1901, Martin County commissioners began replacing wooden bridges over Martin County creeks with those of steel or iron construction. On February 7 that year, the Williamston newspaper reported that erection of a steel bridge over "Sweetened Water" Creek near Williamston had already started and that travel over the old bridge would be interrupted for a few days. The same issue had an item from its Conoho (Oak City) correspondent stating that an iron bridge had been carried there and erected over Conoho Creek in January.

The Martin County Board of Commissioners let a contract to Converse Bridge Company of Chattanooga, Tenn., dated January 10, 1902, for construction of an iron bridge over Gardner's Creek between Williamston and Jamesville. Apparently this was the third bridge there, the first having been built by the Smithwicks in 1794, and rebuilt in 1878 by order of the county commissioners. Costing $2,000, the iron bridge was the third of the type to be built in the county.

The county commissioners next contracted with Carolina Steel Bridge & Construction Company of Burlington on October 5, 1903, for two bridges, one across Conoho Creek between Williamston and Poplar Point and the other across Welch's Creek between Martin and Washington Counties, the latter county to share in the cost of the Welch's Creek bridge. Cost of each of the bridges was $800, according to a newspaper article on March 11, 1904, when one had been completed and materials were being awaited for the other. The Welch's Creek bridge was the fourth and the Conoho structure, known as Whitley's Bridge, was the fifth steel bridge in the county at that time. Two bridges in the county were improved in 1905 by the construction of wooden trestle-type approaches. Butler's Bridge had 95 feet of approaches, and Brown's Bridge had 120 feet of approaches.

According to the North Carolina Yearbook for 1902, W. C. Manning of Williamston was superintendent of roads at that time, and about one-third of the roads in the county had been improved to some extent. It was about this period that road districts were beginning to be set up, usually corresponding to township lines. Some convict labor could be used for the road work. By 1905 public road work was mostly handled under direction of district or township overseers. Male residents between 21 and 45 years in rural sections were required to put in one day's work each month to maintain the roads. Their labor was valued at $1 per day, as compared with 50 cents for convict labor, and some of the citizens would pay the $1 per day rather than put in the physical work.

A departure from the hit-and-miss road maintenance methods and changes in route locations followed the issuance of township road bonds in the early 1900s. In Williamston Township Reuben Harris, late of the county, was employed to supervise road work in the district. Using mainly mule-drawn scoops, he and his workers scooped out a hill in Woodlawn Cemetery, the main route at the time from Williamston to Hamilton.

The next departure came when the newly created N.C. Highway Commission took over the primary routes in the early twenties. The next big step was taken in 1931 when a bill, proposed by the then senator, Elbert S. Peel, Sr., was passed, charging the commission with building and maintaining all secondary roads in the State.

The Williamston Enterprise reported on August 19, 1904, that citizens of Griffins Township held a meeting that month to discuss "good roads," the first of hundreds of gatherings devoted to that subject that were to be recorded as the years rolled on. Citizens of Cross Roads Township followed in the steps of Griffins in advocating good roads, The Enterprise reporting on September 2 that S. F. Everett had offered a personal contribution of $250 for construction of a "hard road" in whatever part of the county it was most needed. A group of Williamston citizens the following February proposed that bonds be issued to build better roads. This was the first time that had been suggested, so far as can be learned. Since there was no county debt at that time, some of the advocates of better roads were urging the commissioners to spend the treasury surplus on roads.

In May, 1905, a new road was extended from the west end of Williamston's Main Street—which ended at that time at Elm Street—out across the railroad through the lands of Wheeler Martin past McCaskey Road to the old Greenville and Robersonville Roads, which intersected at the J. W. Anderson farm. Prior to this, the roundabout route to Robersonville and Greenville was out Main and Elm Streets to the Washington Road, thence on out past Skewarkee Church to the McCaskey Road intersection before turning west.

At the county board of commissioners' meeting on June 5, 1905, by unanimous vote, a tax of 10 cents per $100 valuation was levied on all property in Williamston Township to construct a short experimental stretch of road toward Washington by Skewarkey. J. G. Staton, a member of the board of commissioners, and W. C. Manning, register of deeds, were authorized to buy machinery to build the road. On July 28th, The Enterprise reported several miles of the road had been completed, a clay surface being used to cover the sand base.

It was in 1911 that the good roads movement began to really get underway in Martin County. In March of that year, Williamston Township voted in favor of a $40,000 bond issue for roads, but up to November 30 only about $15,000 worth of the bonds had been sold, $10,500 being used for construction of about seven miles of sand-clay road, the only improved stretch in the county, according to a report made by the state geologist, Joseph Hyde Pratt, to Governor W. W. Kitchen. His report showed the county had a total of 425 miles of roads, 418 of them listed as unimproved, their character described as "earth, with ruts and considerable sand"—probably an understatement, if there ever was one. This was before the day of the State Highway Commission, and there was no state-wide system or program for highways, most of the meager accomplishments being done by county organizations, with a few township groups lending an occasional hand.

However, Martin at that time was one of the leaders in the good roads movement. A large majority of the counties had no improved roads whatever, and relatively few counties or districts had voted any bonds. The geologist's report showed Mecklenberg to be the banner "good roads" county of the state in 1911, with 311 of its 850 total miles listed as "improved," the other 530 being "earth, with ruts and mud," hardly as good as Martin's 417 miles of "earth, with ruts and considerable sand." Of Mecklenberg's 320 miles of "improved roads, 290 were macadamized, 18 miles were gravel, and 12 miles were "specially surfaced," not otherwise explained. At that time, Cabarrus had 30 miles of "asphalt macadam," Forsyth had 9 miles of "tar macadam," and Guilford had 18 miles of "asphalt" for the only real hard-surfaced roads in the state.

Most of the improved roads in the state at that time were listed as "sand-clay," although there was only a slightly smaller amount of "macadam," and lesser amounts of "gravel roads." The report showed North Carolina had a total of 48,235 miles of roads, of which 1,501 miles were "sand-clay," 1,175 were "macadam," 693 were "gravel," and 89½ were "specially surfaced," leaving 44,785½ miles unimproved.

Martin County's seven miles of sand-clay road had cost an average of $1,500 per mile. Costs for similar roads varied widely in other counties, from a low of $50 per mile for five miles in Pitt County to a high of $2,300 for four miles in Gaston County. There were similar variations in the costs of other types of road construction in the different counties. To pay for the interest and retirement of bonds voted for good roads, Williamston Township levied 20 cents per $100 valuation of property in that district.

A good many counties used convicts for road work, but Martin was not one of them in 1911. This county, along with a number of others, leased its prison labor to other counties. Some of the comments from counties using convict labor on public roads were rather interesting. Convict labor was computed at 50 cents per day, while "free" labor was paid $1 per day. The cost of convict labor as compared with free hired labor was reported "better," "50 per cent cheaper," and "cheaper and better" in virtually every instance. As for the effect upon convicts, it was reported that such work "improves health," "improves morally and physically"; but Edgecombe County—to which Martin leased its convicts—reported that "it improves health but not morals." How the convicts' morals were affected by working on public roads was not explained. It might have been interpreted as "morale" instead of "morals," except that people in those days were sentenced to the roads for punishment and not for rehabilitation.

Up to July, 1912, Williamston was the only road district in the county that had voted to issue bonds to finance road improvements. People in other areas were still handling the road work as individuals, especially in Griffins Township. Some time before, all the roads in that township were divided into 17 sections, and all except one were said to be in good shape. A foreman or director was named for each section to set work days and oversee the work. Pleny Peel was one of these directors for more than 15 years.

In January, 1913, the Martin County Representative in the General Assembly, A. R. Dunning, secured passage of a local act enabling the people of Robersonville Road District to vote on issuance of bonds for road improvements. Other townships in the county also obtained authorization to hold similar elections. Early in May Robersonville voted in favor of the bonds by a margin of nine votes, while Goose Nest and Hamilton Townships voted against the proposal by narrow margins. A short time later, the citizens of Williams Township voted down a proposed bond issue by a wide margin, on May 15, 1913. Then in October, another election was held in Hamilton and Goose Nest Townships and, for the second time in less than a year, the bond issue was disapproved, in Hamilton by two votes and in Goose Nest by 60 votes.

Following an appeal by Governor Locke Craig, issued on October 15, 1913, the Martin County commissioners urged all the people of the county to support red letter days in the public roads program. The commissioners, including John L. Croom, B. L. Long, V. R. Taylor, W. M. Perry, and B. S. Cowin, had literature delivered to the road supervisors of all ten townships, directing them to distribute it and support the better roads program.

There were proposals for bond elections in two county townships in 1914, one of which never materialized, according to newspaper reports. The other was in Hamilton Township, where the third election in a little over a year was held, the issue having been defeated in the two previous tries. This time the bond issuance was approved by a small margin, although the news report did not give exact figures. A little later, on August 1st, citizens of Griffins Road District met in the Township House, located near where Piney Grove Baptist Church now stands, and prepared a petition calling on the county commissioners to order a special election on issuing $10,000 in bonds for road improvement in that area. There is no report of further action on the proposal, and Griffins never issued any road bonds.

Exactly half of the county's ten townships were eventually to issue bonds for improved roads before the state took over the entire road system on July 1, 1931. Cross Roads township was the leader in this, having issued $50,000 in bonds, while $40,000 worth of bonds each were issued by Williamston, Robersonville, Hamilton, and Goose Nest townships. The other five districts, Jamesville, Williams, Griffins, Bear Grass, and Poplar Point, never issued any road bonds. At the time the state assumed responsibility in 1931 for maintenance of all the roads, some of the road bonds were in default, and the county eventually had to pay them off. It was past the middle of the century before all of the bonds were retired.

During World War I, Martin County began its involvement in the good roads movement then gaining momentum throughout the state. Plans for a north-south highway route through this section, previously proposed by State Senator Harry W. Stubbs of Williamston, were given a decided boost on May 6, 1918, when Col. Beneham Cameron, North Carolina member of the Bankhead Highway Commission, appeared before the county commissioners on behalf of the Bankhead Trans-Continental Highway. His proposed link between Norfolk and Wilmington would come through Martin County, bridging Roanoke River at or near Williamston.

Colonel Cameron was accompanied by State Highway Engineer Fallis and Hon. Oscar Everett, a native of the county and prominent Durham lawyer at that time. After appearing before the county commissioners, Colonel Cameron addressed a mass meeting that afternoon in a Williamston tobacco warehouse, explaining the plan and presenting maps of the proposed route. The entire project, which included promises of substantial federal aid, was given enthusiastic approval by the commissioners and people at the mass meeting, resolutions urging immediate action being adopted. This was the beginning of a movement that was to spread like wildfire throughout the section and eventually result in the county issuing more than a half million dollars in bonds for hard-surfaced roads and construction of the Roanoke River bridge at Williamston.

A follow-up to the May meeting was held Monday, September 6, 1918, when the Pathfinders, an organized group of boosters for the Bankhead Highway, came to Williamston to sponsor a good roads rally for people of Martin and surrounding counties. Col. Beneham Cameron had arrived the preceding Saturday to meet the group and make the principal address. Large delegations, including prominent bankers, merchants, and business leaders, were present from Beaufort, Pitt, Hertford and Bertie counties, as well as from Martin.

The meeting was called to order by Senator Harry W. Stubbs, whose influence was largely responsible for Colonel Cameron sponsoring the route through this county. Mr. Stubbs reported that he had attended eight meetings since May 6 for discussion of the proposed Bankhead Highway route. He then turned the meeting over to Judge Stephen Bragaw of Washington, who had been elected chairman. Colonel Cameron made a rousing speech, emphasizing the need for the highway through this section. He was followed by several other speakers, including State Highway Engineer Fallis, who explained provisions of the law requiring cooperation to secure federal and state aid for county, state, and national highways.

The newspaper report said perhaps no meeting during the campaign for the highway had been more enthusiastic. Cooperation was the keynote, and it struck a responsive chord in the minds and hearts of the visitors as well as the Martin County people present, the report stated.

Several years later, in April, 1921, before any of the Bankhead Highway had been completed in this county, Colonel Cameron took steps for beautification of the route by appointing a committee for that purpose composed of Miss Mayo Lamb, chairman, Mrs. John D. Biggs, Mrs. Carrie Biggs Williams, Misses Annie Lamb and Vada Wynne, all of Williamston.

The first official action for bridging the Roanoke was taken at a meeting of the county commissioners on July 1, 1918, when an appropriation of $100 was made for a preliminary survey for a public highway from the Roanoke River to the Bertie highlands. It was nearly a year later before another official move was made, but that was a big one. Authorized by a special act passed by the 1919 General Assembly, the commissioners of Martin and Bertie

County met in joint session at the courthouse in Williamston on May 19, 1919, to reach agreement on sharing the cost of the project.

State and federal governments were to put up half of the total cost of the bridge and a causeway and road from the bridge across the swamp to the Bertie highlands. Martin and Bertie Counties agreed to share the other half on a three-to-one basis, Martin to put up three-fourths and Bertie one-fourth. Martin's share was estimated at $150,000 and Bertie's at $50,000. Signing the agreement for the Martin County commissioners were J. L. Hassell, chairman; S. S. Brown, clerk; J. H. D. Peel, H. S. Everett, M. G. Taylor, and Joshua L. Coltrain. Signing for the Bertie commissioners were T. W. Griffin, chairman; S. W. Kenney, clerk; E. C. Harrell, R. J. Shields, and C. W. Spruill. Steps were taken at the meeting to appropriate $2,000 immediately for use by state highway engineers in surveying and preparing plans, specifcations, and estimates.

The commissioners also authorized the issuance of $150,000 worth of road and bridge bonds to take care of the county's share of the cost of the bridges and causeway. By an interesting coincidence, the bonds were printed in a Rutherford, N. J., plant by a man who wrote friends in the county that he had been a typesetter on the first newspaper printed in Williamston in the middle 1850's. The first work on the bridge project was done in 1919, when 60 convicts under the supervision of Capt. C. J. Rhem were brought from the Caledonia Prison Farm to begin clearing underbrush and cutting a right of way for the bridges and causeway through the river swamp to the Bertie highlands nearly four miles away.

County officials were notified in January, 1920, by Engineer W. S. Fallis of the State Highway Commission that contracts were being prepared for construction of the bridges and causeway. Boyle-Roberson Construction Company of Washington, D. C., was the successful bidder for the bridge contracts at a price of $332,308.83, work getting underway in 1920 shortly after the contract was awarded. The contracts called for a 220-foot steel swing span and 2,773½ feet of concrete bridge spans over the Roanoke River and 1,584½ feet of concrete bridge spans over Conine Creek. The approximately three miles of dirt fill were constructed by convict labor, about one and three-quarters miles between the Roanoke and Conine bridges and the remaining one and a quarter miles between Conine bridge and the Bertie highlands. The dirt fill was 50 feet wide at the base, 30 feet wide at the top and 14 feet high, requiring 5,869,100 cubic feet of earth, with a topsoil surface. "Chief" A. K. Haxstun was engineer in charge of the overall project for the state and A. W. Brown was superintendent of the bridge construction work.

It was about this time that the first organized movement for a paved road began to develop in Martin County. At their meeting on July 7, 1919, the county commissioners informally agreed to pay for half of the cost of constructing a hard-surfaced road from Williamston to the Beaufort County line, commissioners of the latter county having already announced their willingness to pave their end of the road to Washington. The commissioners of Martin and Beaufort, along with a delegation of other citizens of the two counties, went to Raleigh on July 14, 1919, appealing to the State Highway Commission to give consideration to building a hard-surfaced highway from Williamston to Washington, if the two counties involved agreed to pay half the cost. The group was informed that no funds were available then for such a project, but it would be given consideration in due time.

Transportation in Martin and all the other counties in North Carolina was given a tremendous boost in 1921, when the General Assembly adopted the $50,000,000 road bond program of Governor Camerom Morrison. His plan called for setting up a system of paved highways linking county seat to county seat throughout the state. In an effort to speed up the process, Martin and a relatively few other counties issued their own bonds and advanced the money to the State Highway Commission to build some of the links in the system. While there were no formal agreements to this effect, it was generally understood that counties making such advances would be reimbursed as state funds became available for paving the projects. However, there were too many counties which did not make any advances, and they later blocked efforts to reimburse those which did. This county advanced more than a half million dollars for such projects, never receiving any reimbursement, creating real hardship to taxpayers during the depression years, and retarding progress in other fields until the early road and bridge bonds were finally retired.

Although the first paved highway in Martin County was not opened until August, 1923, steps for its construction began in February, 1920, when the Beaufort County commissioners agreed to pay half the cost of constructing a hard-surface road from

Washington to the Martin County line. Martin commissioners did not get around to making a similar agreement for the highway from the Beaufort line to Williamston until February 6, 1922. The Contract for the Beaufort end was let July 22, 1921; and the Martin County end was let in early March, 1922; there being about 11 miles of the road in each county. It is not known exactly when the Beaufort portion of the route was opened, but the last concrete was poured on the Martin County end at 9:30 a.m., July 20, 1923, with opening of the strip scheduled after about a two-weeks "curing" period.

W. A. Hart of Tarboro, highway commissioner for the First District, came to Williamston in April, 1921, to discuss paving of what was later to become U. S. 64, starting at Williamston and continuing on through Everetts, Robersonville, Parmele, Bethel, Tarboro, and Rocky Mount to Raleigh. Then, in May, 48 miles of county roads were added to the state system for maintenance and improvement, under the provisions of an act passed by the 1921 General Assembly. The roads were those running from Williamston to the Pitt County line, via Everetts, Robersonville and Parmele; from Williamston through Jamesville to the Washington County line; and from Williamston to the Beaufort County line, all of them being links in the county-seat-to-county-seat program.

A little later, on August 13, 1921, the Halifax-Williamston Highway Association was formed at a meeting held in Hamilton, and resolutions were adopted requesting the county commissioners to urge addition to the state system of the route from Williamston to Halifax, via Hamilton, Oak City, Hobgood, and Scotland Neck. Officers of the Association were Harry Waldo, president; L. J. Baker, H. T. Everett, M. P. Taylor, and Dr. B. L. Long, vice presidents; and P. L. Salsbury, secretary and treasurer. The resolution was drafted by Mr. Salsbury and D. G. Matthews, Sr. This highway, later to be known as N. C. 125, was a contentious subject for a number of years and was the last of the major through routes in the county to be hard surfaced.

Meeting with Highway Commissioner W. A. Hart on November 18, 1921, members of the county board were advised about the status of three projects. Mr. Hart stated the highway commission would undertake to begin work on the Martin County end of the highway between Williamston and the Beaufort County line right away, provided the county would agree to pay one-half of the cost. He promised the highway from Williamston to the Pitt

County line near Bethel would be paved entirely by the state and the state would take over and maintain a highway from Williamston through Hamilton and Oak City to the Halifax County line if the county would build a sand-clay or gravel road over that route at its own expense. It was estimated that the county's share of the cost for the projects would total about $300,000.

No action was taken at that meeting of the board, and a special session was called for November 30 to hear reaction to the proposals. No action was taken at the November 30 special meeting, either, but at the regular meeting in December, resolutions declaring each of the projects to be a "public necessity" were adopted. Then, at a special meeting on January 23, 1922, $300,000 in road and bridge bonds were authorized to pay for them. At the regular meeting of the commissioners on February 6, 1922, agreements with the highway commission were approved to pay half the cost of the paved highway to the Beaufort County line and the entire cost of a sand-clay or gravel road to the Halifax County line. At a special meeting on February 27, called at the request of Mr. Hart, the commissioner explained that bids for the Washington highway project totaled more than originally estimated by some $45,000, and the board agreed to accept the increased cost, paving the way for letting the contract in March, 1922.

The county's bonded debt for roads, after issuance of the $300,000 in bonds in 1922, totaled some $450,000, most of the previous issues having been used mainly to finance the building of the Roanoke River bridges and causeway. The last of the road and bridge bond issues of the 1920's was issued in February, 1926, when the county board authorized an issue of $175,000, mostly to finance deficiencies incurred in completing the roads program on main routes and for improvements to secondary roads and bridges in the county.

Probably the greatest program of road improvements in the history of Martin County was underway in June of 1922. Construction of the Roanoke River bridges and causeway was nearing completion, despite a number of set-backs that had occurred while the work was underway. The Contract for hard surfacing of the road from Tarboro to the Martin line had been let, and grading of the eastern end of the road from the Pitt County line had been completed as far as Everetts. Grading of the road from Williamston toward the Halifax County line was in progress, and grading was scheduled to start shortly on the highway from

Williamston toward the Washington County line at Ward's Bridge over Welch's Creek.

A number of laws designed to make travel faster, more pleasant and convenient came into being along about the time when physical improvement of the roads and highways was the main order of the day. For instance, an act was adopted by the 1917 legislature requiring county commissioners to have road signs erected at intersections within 10 miles of cities and towns, showing direction and mileage to those which were nearest. Another important act related to transportation was one adopted by the legislature in 1921 putting the stock or no-fence law into effect in Martin County early in January. Prior to that, roaming cattle and hogs had created traffic hazards on the roads, and it was also necessary to open and close gates on roads at the border of Martin and other counties where the stock law was already in effect. A great many farmers despised the law, although it was voted into effect in at least four Martin County townships during the year 1920 before the county-wide act came into effect in 1921.

A mile stone was passed in the history of transportation in Martin County on Thursday, September 7, 1922, when the bridges and causeway from Williamston over the Roanoke River and swamp to the Bertie highlands were formally dedicated and opened to traffic. At that time the state's most imposing highway project, the event was attended by an estimated 6,000 persons, including Governor Cameron Morrison and a host of state dignitaries. Among them some half dozen highway commissioners, as well as prominent figures in various walks of life from all the sections of eastern North Carolina which were to be served by the new structure. It was probably the biggest day in the county's history up to that time.

Construction work on the causeway and structures had been completed several weeks earlier, first unofficial crossing from Williamston to the Bertie highlands by others than the work force being made on Sunday, July 23, by Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Manning, Engineer E. E. Boney, Minier Hostetler, William Henry (Sally) Gurkin, and S. Collin Peel. The county commissioners, at their regular meeting in August, made arrangements to pay expenses for celebrating the opening of the bridge.

The day's proceedings began with a parade of more than a thousand cars across the bridge and causeway on a tour of inspection, after which the governor's party, State Highway Commission members, state officials, commissioners of Martin and Bertie Counties, and newspaper representatives attended a luncheon at the Masonic Hall, served by members of the ladies' aid society of the Baptist Church. The Hon. Walter ("Pete") Murphy, of Salisbury, veteran legislator who had held about every office of prominence in the General Assembly, served as toastmaster and presented the distinguished guests, a number of whom made brief remarks.

Among the prominent persons attending were Governor Cameron Morrison; First District Representative Lindsay C. Warren; Frank Page, chairman of the State Highway Commission; H. O. Joslin, assistant chairman; Highway Commissioners W. A. Hart of Tarboro, John E. Cameron of Kinston, W. A. McGirt of Wilmington, John Sprunt Hill of Durham, J. Elwood Cox of High Point, W. C. Wilkinson of Charlotte, Rufus A. Doughton of Sparta, J. C. McBee of Bakersville, and J. C. Strikeleather of Asheville; Heriot Clarkson of Charlotte, later to become a justice of the state supreme court; O. Max Gardner of Shelby, later to become governor; Josephus Daniels, member of the Woodrow Wilson cabinet and later to become ambassador to Mexico; Col. Beneham Cameron, state member of the Bankhead Highway Commission; J. H. Matthews and Judge Francis D. Winston of Windsor; Frank Kugler and A. M. Dumay of Washington; W. H. S. Burgwyn of Northampton County; and many others.

Newspapermen present, in addition to Josephus Daniels, included Col. Wade H. Harris and Brack Barclay of the Charlotte Observer, J. A. osborne of the Washington Daily News, W. Tom Bost of the Greensboro Daily News, O. J. Coffin of the Raleigh Times, and Ben Dixon MacNeil of the Raleigh News and Observer. Members of the highway commission staff recognized by Mr. Murphy were W. D. Upham, chief engineer; W. L. Craven, chief bridge engineer; C. D. Farmer, manager of the motor department; J. C. Gardner, district engineer of Tarboro; Walter L. Cahoon, attorney for the commission; W. S. Fallis, engineer for this project; and A. K. Haxstun, chief resident engineer of the project.

Judge Francis D. Winston, of Windsor, made the principal talk at the luncheon, closing with an original poem he had composed for the occasion, "Good-bye Speller's Ferry." Brief remarks were also made by Frank Page, Josephus Daniels, Max Gardner, Rufe Doughton, and Governor Morrison.

Following the luncheon, the distinguished guests moved to the fair grounds, where the main program was presented at the grandstand, with a tremendous crowd on hand. Senator Harry W. Stubbs presented Judge Winston, who presided and introduced the speakers, leading off with the governor. Colonel Cameron followed with a brief statement about the history of the project and Chairman Page gave a factual account of the construction problems and their solution, paying tribute to the engineering skills of Mr. Craven, Mr. Fallis, and Mr. Haxstun. Commissioner W. A. Hart concluded the program with an expression of his appreciation to the other commission members and officials for their cooperation in enabling the project to be brought to a successful conclusion. Total cost of the bridges and causeway was cited as $590,000, considerably more than the original estimates.

Completion and opening of the river bridges and fill in 1922 marked the first phase of converting transportation to the automobiles, which had begun coming into the county in substantial numbers less than a dozen years previously. So far as can be learned, Dr. B. L. Long of Hamilton owned the first motor car in Martin County, driving "a handsome new automobile from Hamilton to Williamston" on March 5, 1911. Harry A. Biggs is said to have owned the first automobile in Williamston, make and date not known, and Herbert D. Peele owned the second car in Williamston, a Cameron, made in Waltham, Mass. Mr. Peele, about two years later, had the sales agency for Metz automobiles in Williamston. Dr. R. H. Hargrove is said to have owned the first car in Robersonville.

One of the first—if not the first—auto agency-garage firms in the county was opened by S. Rome Biggs, Sr., in early February of 1912. It handled Buicks, the prices ranging from $850 to $1,800. It was explained that all Buicks had self-starters at that time. In January of the following year, J. Paul Simpson, agent, sold a seven-passenger four-cylinder Studebaker to Harry A. Biggs. It had an electric starter and lights, outstanding features in those days. Wiley Rogerson & Company in Robersonville became agents for the Ford cars in that community in March, 1914; and in December of the same year, J. W. Green, a farmer who lived near Williamston, bought the garage and repair shop from S. R. Biggs, located in the Leggett block on Washington Street, and began selling Ford cars under the name of the Martin County Agency. It was about this time, or possibly a little later, that Herbert D. Peele obtained the Metz Agency.

The Ford franchise changed hands frequently in Williamston in succeeding years. J. W. Watts secured the agency and operated it as Watts Garage, constructing the garage building in Washington Street which served as Ford headquarters for many years. W. L. Stalls was operating the agency as the Ford Garage in 1919, and a little later B. R. Barnhill secured the dealership and operated the business until July, 1925, when N. C. Green and J. D. Woolard became owners, operating as Williamston Motor Company. Mr. Woolard later disposed of his interest, and N. C. Green continues as owner and manager to this time. The Ford agency in Robersonville also changed hands a number of times following Wiley Rogerson & Company, and in 1974 was being operated as Quality Motors, Inc., of Robersonville.

S. R. Biggs went back into business as Buick dealer in Williamston in 1916, his garage being in the old Hassell stables, located about where the Tar Heel Building now stands on Main Street. Dr. H. B. York became dealer for Overland cars in 1916, and constructed a garage building on Washington Street. W. L. Stalls, after giving up the Ford dealership, became agent for Star and later the Willy's Overland and Durant lines of automobiles. B. R. Barnhill also returned to the automobile business in Williamston, selling cars on a sub-dealership basis for several Washington concerns, and then securing the Star agency in Williamston in 1927.

The Chevrolet franchise also changed hands several times in the history of county new-car dealerships. Harris Motor Company operated in Robersonville for several years, part of the time working with Peel Motor Company on a sub-dealership basis in Williamston. House Chevrolet Company also was located in Robersonville, later becoming Better Chevrolet Company, and it, too, operated a sub-dealership in Williamston until the Roanoke Chevrolet Company was organized and began operations January 1, 1934, with the late J. H. Edwards as manager. This firm has held the Chevrolet franchise in Williamston since that time, in 1974 being managed by Mr. Edwards' son, Jack Edwards. Lee House was manager of the Better Chevrolet Company in Robersonville throughout his lfietime, John Gray Taylor later becoming manager and continuing the business until his death. That firm was succeeded by Manning Chevrolet Company, which operated a brief period of time before the dealership was closed out in Robersonville.

The only record of a new-car dealership in the county, other than those in Williamston and Robersonville, is that of Champion Auto Company in Everetts, which received its first shipment of Star cars in January, 1923. Managed by L. A. Clark, it continued operations for about eight years, and in 1928 it was advertising the Durant line of automobiles, which included the Star.

At one time or another there were dozens of auto manufacturers, and over the years practically all makes and models were handled by the various dealers in Martin County. The number of domestic car manufacturers has dwindled to four in more recent years, and in late 1974 there were five authorized dealers for new cars in Williamston and one in Robersonville, representing practically all makes and models made in the United States except those of American Motors.

In 1974, Quality Motors, Inc., of Robersonville, had the Ford franchise for that community and handled all models of Ford cars and trucks. The five other authorized dealerships in the county then were located in Williamston, listed alphabetically as follows: Dixie Motor Company, Dodge cars and trucks; Griffin Motor Company, Plymouth, Chrysler, and Imperial cars; Chas. H. Jenkins & Company, Cadillac, Oldsmobile, Buick and Pontiac cars and GMC trucks; Roanoke Chevrolet Company, Chevrolet cars and trucks; Williamston Motor Company, Lincoln, Mercury and Ford cars, trucks, and tractors.

Martin County had its first automobile accident about five years before there was a car owned in the county. According to an article in the Williamston Enterprise, that first accident occurred December 27, 1906, on the Sandy Point Road, just off what is now known as Highway 125. The automobile was owned and driven by Surry Parker of Pinetown, and he was accompanied by A. W. Robinson of Sharptown, Md., president of Wicomico Lumber Company, and F. U. Barnes of Williamston. The car struck a stump, throwing Mr. Robinson out and bruising him about the head, shoulders and side, though he was not seriously hurt. The others were not injured at all. The car sustained some damage, but was repaired at the shop of T. C. Cooke that afternoon.

One of the earliest, if not the first, train and automobile collisions in this county occurred on August 4, 1915, between 6 and 7 o'clock in the afternoon, near Parmele. The car was owned and driven by R. L. Smith, who was accompanied by his son, Irving, both of Robersonville, and Gideon Barnhill, from near Everetts.

The driver suffered only minor injuries, but his son was seriously injured, remaining unconscious throughout the night. Mr. Barnhill suffered a broken arm. The car was knocked some 30 feet by the locomotive, being badly battered and losing all four tires. Engineer of the train was Charles L. Ellington, who lived in Williamston before going to Kinston to make his home. These two accidents were only the earliest of the many thousands which were to follow over the succeeding years, causing hundreds of deaths and serious injuries as well as millions of dollars in property damage. The automobile brought its blessings in pleasure and convenience to the people of this county, but it also had its offsetting hours of anguish and tragedy for many as well.

However, there were accidents both before and after the automobile became commonplace. Back in June, 1911, The Enterprise reported Miss Carrie Whichard and J. L. Everett were injured when they were thrown out of a buggy when a mule ran away. Miss Whichard sustained a facial injury, and Everett was confined to his room for some time following the accident.

Back in June, 1912, when automobiles were becoming fairly numerous in the county, speeding was becoming a matter of concern to law enforcement authorities. The town of Williamston had a speed limit of 10 miles an hour, but few observed it. As a matter of fact, few automobiles would run that slow in high gear. It was proposed that a 5-mile limit be posted on the Washington Street curve where Griffin's Quick Lunch is now locted, but no action was ever taken on the proposal. It is also reported that a county farmer by the name of Cotanch saw the sign posting the 10-mile speed limit as he was coming into town, and he turned his ox and cart around to return home, explaining that he could not go that fast.

The highway from Williamston to Washington had been in use for only about three months when efforts were started in December, 1923, to have a special traffic officer employed to patrol the link. It was several years prior to creation of the highway patrol, and a number of counties employed special traffic officers to enforce the speed laws. It was not until July, 1927, that a legislature act required use of hand signals by motorists before slowing down, stopping or making right and left turns. The signals were substantially the same as those required today; it was many years before electric turn signals were to be invented and required on all vehicles.

Road building in Martin County came to a virtual halt in early January, 1927. Speaking to a Kiwanis meeting in Williamston on January 8th, that year, Frank C. Kugler, of Washington, the new highway commissioner for the district, explained that all funds allocated to this area had been exhausted, and that no new projects could be anticipated in the near future. Despite his remarks, a little over a year later, on March 13, 1928, a contract was let for hard surfacing the highway from Williamston to the Washington County line, the old Highway No. 90 route, the bid price being $293,876. This portion of the highway had been graded and bridges built back in 1924, but the road was left with a gravel and topsoil surface.

Although not in this county—but highly important to it—surfacing of the highway from the river bridge at Williamston to Windsor was begun on September 28, 1928, over six years after the structures and causeway had been completed and opened to traffic in 1922. Some years before, at its annual meeting December 3, 1924, the Coastal Highway Association had urged the hard surfacing of all sections of N. C. Highway No. 30—later to become known as U. S. 17—and construction of a bridge over the Chowan River. The organization had also gone on record at that time as recommending no more building of highways in the state of less than 16-foot width.

Along about that time, efforts in Martin County were being directed toward getting N. C. Highway 125 hard surfaced from Williamston to the Halifax County line. "Now, let us turn to that old hymn, No. 125," T. B. Slade, chairman of the Martin County Board of Commissioners, told Highway Commissioner Frank C. Kugler at a meeting to discuss the matter on April 4, 1929. The county had spent $210,000 of its own bond money in grading and topsoiling the road, with the understanding that the state would then pave it. The commissioner stated Martin had overdrawn its allotment for roads and that he did not know when, if ever, the road would be hard surfaced.

Despite the commissioner's remarks, a contract for 5½ miles of paving, from E. P. Bunch's store in Williamston to the Jim Everett farm, was let in early December, 1930. The section was completed and opened for traffic on April 12, 1931. The new road did not run through Woodlawn Cemetery, but went straight out North Haughton Street, merging with the old road near Whitley's Canal, or Skewarkey Gut.

Another milestone in the history of transportation in Martin County was reached July 1, 1931, when the state took over the entire system of roads and highways in all the counties of the state. Prior to that time, township road commissions or the counties were responsible for maintenance and improvement of secondary roads. In February, when the road bill was introduced in the legislature, Martin had a total of 505.1 miles of roads. The state was then maintaining 80.30 miles, a large portion of which was hard surfaced, except for the road from Williamston through Hamilton and Oak City to the Halifax line. Only 19.8 of the 424.8 miles of roads maintained by the several townships and the county were classed as "improved," the remaining 405 miles being listed as "unimproved."

Five of the county's townships had issued bonds for improvement of roads in their respective districts, but very little had been accomplished other than stabilizing and laying out routes. The townships still had to levy special taxes to take care of the bond retirement and interest after the state took over maintenance of all the roads. Some of the townships defaulted on payments, and the county was forced to pay off some of the bonds. This became a sore subject with county taxpayers later, when they were unable to recover any of the funds which had been advanced for bridge and paving projects on main routes and for which they had been given to understand they would be reimbursed by the state.

Convict labor was used to a great extent about the time the state assumed responsibility for maintenance of all roads and highways in 1931. Camps for prisoners were established at a number of central locations in the counties. One was started in this county in July, 1931, shortly after the takeover, and it was still maintained on the old Greenville road not far from Williamston in 1974, although no prison labor was being used on the highways at that time.

When the state assumed control of all highways on July 1, 1931, Martin was placed in Division A and Section 2 of the State Highway System. This was divided into five sub-regins, some extending over into adjoining counties, but mainly in Martin. The system in this county was headed by Engineer E. S. Peabody and Assistant Engineer Wallace, both of Washington, and Assistant Engineer W. A. Cherry of Williamston. The five county subsections were Section 18, including Griffins, Jamesville, and a part of Williams Townships, headed by J. E. Hines, who lived at the home of J. J. Manning in Griffins; Section 19, including Bear

Grass, Williamston, and part of Cross Roads, headed by J. P. Hodges of Bear Grass; No. 20, Robersonville and parts of Cross Roads and Poplar Point, in charge of E. H. Ross; No. 21, Hamilton, parts of Williamston, Poplar Point, and Goose Nest Townships, headed by A. W. Boyd; and No. 22, Goose Nest Township and a number of the main highways, headed by G. N. Cowin.

Along in the thirties, county people interested in roads tried to recover some of the funds advanced to the state for building bridges and paving highways in the early days of the good roads movement. Occasionally, they would get a little dab of road work of one sort or another, possibly more as a sop to keep them from getting too vociferous than for any other reasons. They learned that Martin was one of 18 counties which had made such advances based on an "understanding" that they were to be reimbursed. None ever recovered any funds, although $8,000,000 was appropriated in June, 1927, to repay a number of counties which had made similar advances but had required iron-clad contracts instead of an "understanding" for their reimbursement. In addition to refusing to repay the 18 counties for their advances, the highway commission, in making allotments for future road projects, charged them with the roads that had been built and surfaced by their own funds.

Members of the General Assembly from Martin County in the 1930's took leading parts in the futile battle for reimbursement. State Senator R. L. Coburn introduced a bill in the 1935 legislature on February 19, 1935, calling for refunds of donations or loans advanced to the highway commission for construction of certain main highways. Martin County's claim at that time was for $401,907.88. through the county had actually issued some $625,000 in bonds for such purposes. Nothing came of the attempt, the bill never being reported out of the committee. In July of the following year, the Eastern Carolina Chamber of Commerce sponsored a meeting in Williamston for representatives of the counties involved, in an attempt to plan a united effort to secure refunds from the next legislature. This movement also failed. Then, in 1939, shortly after the legislature convened, the Eastern Carolina Chamber of Commerce sponsored another attempt at concerted action at a meeting of representatives of the counties involved held in Raleigh January 18. Martin County Representative Hugh G. Horton was named chairman of a committee to head the drive for the refunds. Other members were Representatives Mallison of Pamlico, Worthington of Pitt, Senators Corey of Pitt and Palmer of Cabarrus. This movement likewise failed, and it marked the end of attempts to secure the repayments.

The record high water accompanying the August, 1940 flood along the Roanoke River just about destroyed the work of many years when it washed out the fill and wrecked all the bridges in the causeway, except the main bridge over the river itself at Williamston. Crest of the flood peaked at the river bridge on the morning of August 22, when the gauge stood at 20 feet and 5 inches, or some 10½ feet above flood stage. Repairs and relacement of the bridges and fill required more than a year and cost well in excess of $300,000, not counting work done by highway commission forces, or more than half as much as the entire original cost of the project some 20 years earlier.

Although all the damage to the bridges and fill was in Bertie County, Williamston and Martin County were the principal sufferers while the main north-south highway was out. Traffic had to be rerouted for three weeks before even light traffic was permitted over the road and bridges at the Williamston crossing. After being closed since August 19th, vehicles of up to seven tons gross were permitted to cross again on September 11. Contracts for more than a mile of the earthen fill and four new bridges were let October 17, 1940, with work supposed to be completed in 125 working days. Contract price for restoring the fill was $48,245, with an additional $141,832 for building the four bridges.

Martin County's next major milestone in highway construction came in 1949, following the election of W. Kerr Scott as governor. He was elected on a platform pledging a $200,000,000 bond issue for surfacing of so-called "farm-to-market" or secondary roads throughout the state. A state-wide election was held on the proposal on June 4, 1949, Martin County voting in favor of it by a margin of 1,364 to 616. Hamilton Township was the only one in the county to cast a plurality against the bond issue, the vote there being 47 for and 51 against. On the other hand, Poplar Point Township, adjoining Hamilton, voted 31 for and only 4 against. The bond issue was carried in the state by a sizable margin.

In March of the following year, 1950, first allocations of the $200 millions in bond money were made for road projects in Martin County by the State Highway & Public Works Commission. It was announced that projects approved for work to begin shortly included the road from Bear Grass to Spring Green, via Everetts;

one from Gold Point to Oak City, via a point near Hassell; and from Conoho Church on Highway 125 to what is known as the "River Road" from Hamilton to Palmyra. Specifications were not announced at the time and routings were not definite for some portions, but the work had been approved. At the same time, it was stated that work was going forward rapidly on structures and preparations for surfacing of Route 171 from Jamesville to the Beaufort County line, partly financed with federal funds and not a bond money project. A portion of unpaved road from Holly Springs Church to Route 171 also was being widened and made ready for surfacing, state highway crews handling that work.

Most of the "farm-to-market" roads in this county followed previous routes which were simply widened and black-topped. There were some critics who termed the projects "Scott Tissue Roads" and claimed the routes should have been resurveyed, straightened and constructed with a more substantial base. For many of the rural residents served by the roads, however, they were a blessing that enabled them to travel over roads that previously had been impassible for weeks at the time in various seasons of the years.

In July, 1951, it was announced that Martin County had been allotted the last of its share of the state's $200 million bond money. The money was to be used for surfacing 28.6 additional miles of road while others were to be stabilized for surfacing later, when and if the money became available. It was explained that the final share of road funds would be used for improving routes with the greatest traffic count as determined by highway authorities, and would include roads in all parts of the county. In recent years, priority of projects usually has been determined at joint meetings of the county commissioners and highway officials.

Increased traffic on both U. S. Highways 17 and 64 in Martin County created a bottleneck on the streets of Williamston, and it became imperative in recent years to build a by-pass for through traffic. Accordingly, the latest improvements to main highway routes in the county have been construction and four-laning of the by-pass around Williamston and four-laning of a five-mile stretch of U. S. 17 from Williamston south to a point just beyond its intersection with the old Smithwick Creek road.

The Contract for the Williamston by-pass was let in October, 1953, J. S. Hill Construction Company of Washington being the low bidder at $171,000, and work was started in December.

Original plans for the project called for four lanes, but a portion of the allocation was transferred to other jobs, and only two lanes were built. Some ten years later, on May 28, 1963, when it was finally decided to resurface and add the two lanes, the Hill firm was again the low bidder, at $444,853.50, more than double the bid for the first two lanes.

The most recent work on main highways in Martin County was four-laning of U. S. 17 from the Skewarkee intersection in Williamston approximately five miles south past the intersection of the old Smithwick Creek road. Two contracts were let in 1969 for the proejct, one for $780,619.55 covering the grading, coarse aggregate, concrete base, binder and surface; the other, totaling $68,414.55, for a concrete bridge over "Little Creek" at the Old Mill Inn site. The overall total, $849,033.91, is believed to be the largest amount ever allocated for a single highway project in Martin County, and this did not include right of way costs and expense of moving several dwellings and farm buildings along the route. It should be pointed out, however, that the four-lane intersection at Skewarkey was one of the most expensive items of the project. This project was completed and put in use in 1970.

Another dimension was added to transportation in this county with the development of the airplane in relatively recent years. William Thomas Crawford, son of the late Sheriff J. C. Crawford of Williamston, was said to have been the first person in the county to obtain a private pilot's license. He owned a Waco two-place biplane, which he used to give flying instruction and provide charter flights in 1938 and 1939, keeping the machine based in Rocky Mount at that time.

Under his leadership and that of Tennyson Ayers, a young Bear Grass man who had obtained his flying license, a club was formed in March, 1939, to purchase another airplane, a Taylorcraft, and to build a landing strip in Williamston. About a dozen young men of the Williamston-Bear Grass section made up the organization, named Williamston Aero Club, and arrangements were made to obtain a 19-acre field on the M. D. Wilson farm, near the Roanoke River, to use as a flying field. Officers and members of the club were Henry A. Johnson, president; Shep Johnson, vice president; W. F. Sparrow, secretary; Maurice Peel, treasurer; Tom Crawford, instructor; Tennyson Ayers, Fred Ayers, W. M. Peel, Jesse Keel, Linwood Roebuck, and two others whose names were not revealed. "They don't want their wives to know they are flying high," a club member explained.

Work on the airfield, located just back of the present veneer plant site, was completed and used for the first time on Sunday, March 6, 1939. Hundreds of Martin County people in succeeding months took their first airplane rides from that little landing strip with a turf runway, brief sight-seeing trips being a feature of the service afforded there.

A little more than two months later, on May 19, the first and very probably the only air-mail dispatch originating in this county was made by Pilot Crawford from the field. In observance of Air Mail Week—and purely as a voluntary gesture without pay—Mr. Crawford flew the club's monoplane to Plymouth to pick up a pouch of mail at 9:30 a.m., landed in Williamston 18 minutes later to receive another pouch with 42 pieces of air mail from post-office employees A. R. White and F. Earl Wynne, and lifted off at 10 o'clock for Tarboro and another pick-up. He then took off from there with the entire lot and carried it to another pilot in Rocky Mount, R. E. Lee, who flew it to Raleigh for delivery to a regularly scheduled air-mail flight to New York, and the mail was distributed there that afternoon. Leslie T. Fowden, Sr., was Williamston postmaster at that time and helped work out arrangements for the special air-mail delivery.

At the present time there are more than a dozen aircraft owned and based at two airfields in the county, in addition to a number of other airplanes operated to and from the county by industrial firms which have plants and branches in the section. At one time the pulp plant in the lower part of the county had an airport with a grass runway which could handle aircraft of substantial size; but in recent years expansion of its plant facilities has covered much of the area with buildings, and the field can no longer be used. The firm at one time also used amphibian airplanes, landing on the river near the plant, but floating logs and debris constituted a hazard at times, and the practice was abandoned.

The county now has two airfields open to the public, one privately owned and operated and the other constructed and operated by the Martin County Airport Authority, a governmental corporation. The privately owned facility, Harris Airport, was constructed in 1968 and is located a little over a mile south of Williamston on U. S. Highway 17. It has a turf runway 150 feet wide by 3,800 feet long, and there were about 10 privately owned airplanes based there in 1974. While it has no hangars, tie-down facilities are available, as well as rental service and flying instruction, and it has pumps for both 80 and 100 octane aviation fuel.

M. W. Holloman is manager of the airport on a part-time basis.

The county airport is located on the Everetts-Gold Point road, almost equi-distant from three of the principal towns of the county, Robersonville, Hamilton, and Williamston. It is modern in all respects, having been materially upgraded in recent years. It now has an asphalt-surfaced runway of 3,700 feet, is lighted, and has a visual slope indicator for night operations. There is a small brick office building with telephone, a taxi strip, and a tie-down area for eight aircraft. Constructed by matching funds from federal, state, county, and municipal governments, it is hoped that some hangars will be built in the very near future, and efforts are underway to secure state aid for installation of a non-directional radio beacon. W. E. Dunn, Jr., was manager of the airport in the spring of 1974, when six privately owned aircraft were based there, affording both charter flights and flying instruction. The airport also has pumps for 80 and 100 octane gasoline, but no fuel storage yet for jet craft, although several of that type have landed there.

At one time there was a relatively short landing strip in Robersonville, located between the railroad and U. S. Highway 64-13, but it has been discontinued and now has a number of buildings on it. Located in the eastern part of the town, it was used as a base for crop-dusting operations for a time. There are also a few private landing strips in the county at present, one of them being on the C. B. Ayers farm west of Bear Grass. He has a small Piper Cub airplane for his own use based there.

TRANSPORTATION—RAILROAD

The first recorded mention of a railroad for Martin County is contained in a charter for the Tarborough-Hamilton Railroad, issued by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1831. It is also the last and only record of that railroad, because it never materialized. A railroad was built years afterward between Hamilton and Princeville, the latter just across the Tar River from Tarboro, but that was called Hitch's Railroad, and it was more or less a logging operation, although it was licensed as a public carrier for a time.

A number of other railroads have been proposed, discussed, planned, and a few even built and operated in the county since 1831. A company was formed and issued a charter in February, 1861, called the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company, but for a number of reasons, the Civil War being one of them, it required nearly a quarter of a century and several name changes before it was finally completed and began operating in 1882. This and several extensions and branches are still in business in the county today as the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company.

When it was chartered on February 23, 1861, authorized capital stock of the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company was set at $300,000 with 3,000 shares being issued, each having a par value of $100. Ten men were named from Martin County and ten from Edgecombe County as commissioners, empowered to appoint a chairman, treasurer, and such other officers considered necessary, and to open books for subscriptions of stock. Commissioners were empowered to sell the stock on a basis of $5 per share when the subscription was made, the remainder being due at the call of the railroad officials. The books were to remain open until the sum of $35,000, at least, was subscribed, upon which the incorporation would become effective.

The commissioners from Martin County appointed by the act were as follows: Asa Biggs, D. W. Bagley, C. B. Hassell, John R. Lanier, John C. Lamb, L. L. Clements, Archibald Staton, L. S. Yates, Bryant Bennett, and H. M. Mizell; from Edgecombe: Henry T. Clarke, Wm. M. Pippins, Robert Brown, John Norfleet, Whitmel Loyd, Theofolus Hyman, Wm. B. Cherry, B. C. Mayo, Calvin Jones and Joshua Lawrence. The commissioners were directed to call a stockholders' meeting as soon as $25,000 in stock had been subscribed, and the stockholders were to elect seven directors who would be empowered to handle affairs of the company, elect officers, and perform other like duties.

From subsequent acts of the legislature, it is evident that stock subscriptions were insufficient up to the time of the Civil War to begin construction of the railroad. There is no further mention of the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad until after the war, when an amendment ratified on March 12, 1866, authorized the merger of the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company with the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad Company, conditioned upon approval of stockholders of both companies. Then, on December 18, 1866, an act was adopted re-enacting provisions of the original charter, as well as the amendment cited above. Merger of the two railroads, however, did not take place until January 10, 1894.

At succeeding sessions of the legislature, a number of laws relative to the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad were enacted, including one in 1868 authorizing issuance of $150,000 in state bonds for construction of the line. Interest on this issue was in default in 1879, and another act was adopted at that session "to compromise, commute, and settle" the debt by issuing and exchanging new bonds on the basis of one-third to one, or $50,000 in new bonds for the original $150,000 to enable the railroad, then known as the Seaboard & Raleigh and shortly thereafter as the Albemarle & Raleigh, to complete the track between Williamston and Tarboro.

One really grandiose scheme found its way into an act adopted by the General Assembly on February 3, 1869. It provided for expanding the power of the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company to extend its road "from Williamston to Plymouth, to Washington and to Wilmington, and from Edenton to a point at or near Suffolk, in Virginia," and increased the capital stock authorization of the company from its original $300,000 to $3,500,000. Where the idea or demand for such an expansion came from cannot be learned from available records. The company was having enough trouble obtaining money to build the little more than 30 miles of railroad between Williamston and Tarboro, without giving consideration to the problems that would face it in financing the several hundred miles of additional trackage proposed in the act. At any rate, this is the only recorded mention of this idea.

Starting in April, 1866, Elder C. B. Hassell of Williamston had a number of entries in his diary concerning the railroad project between Williamston and Tarboro. He was one of the commissioners appointed in the original act incorporating the company in 1861, and a meeting was held in his store on April 14, 1866, at which it was decided to call a meeting of the commissioners in Tarboro on May 15 to reorganize.

Elder Hassell, D. W. Bagley, L. S. Yates, John R. Lanier, L. L. Clements and Archibald Staton, Martin County members of the original commission, and attorneys J. Edwin Moore and Abner S. Williams, of Williamston, said to be "friends" of the proposed railroad, went to Tarboro on May 15, 1866, and met with commissioners of Edgecombe County, a majority of whom were reported to be present. It was decided to reopen books to receive subscriptions for stock in the railroad company. The books were opened in Williamston on June 7, 1866, and four days later, stock subscriptions from the county amounted to $22,400.

Records available show a stock subscription was made by Samuel Rogers on February 4, 1867, for 10 shares, or $1,000 worth, on which he paid $50, or 5 per cent, as required by the charter. Joseph D. Biggs and C. B. Hassell subscribed for a like amount, and paid $50 each, on February 12, J. R. Rogers paying $25 for half as much stock on the same date. D. W. Bagley, one of the ten commissioners, received more stock subscriptions than any of the others, turning in $860 on April 29, and another $325 in notes and cash on July 31; Kader Biggs & Company, of Norfolk, collected $415 on 83 shares sold there, as reported on May 17; and Commissioner Robert C. Brown of Tarboro turned in $230 as 5 percent on 46 shares on May 25. All of this was in 1867.

That same year, on February 12, a meeting of stockholders of the company was held at Hassell's store in Williamston, but the company could not be organized because a sufficient amount of money had not been paid in at the time. Subsequently, on May 25, 1867, a meeting was held at the courthouse and seven directors of the railroad were elected as follows: Asa Biggs, Joseph S. Staton, H. D. Robason (Roberson), Joseph D. Biggs, D. W. Bagley, Jesse R. Stubbs and James Edwin Moore. There is no mention of officers being elected at that time, and no record of anyone from Edgecombe County being on the board of directors. As a matter of fact, the railroad project from about this time forward had no mention of anyone from Edgecombe being involved. It is known that more than $5,000 in stock was pledged by citizens of Edgecombe and some years later they bought $9,000 worth of railroad bonds when it was proposed to extend the line to Raleigh, but it is believed that no officers or directors of the company came from that county.

The first report of work being started on the railroad is contained in an entry in Hassell's diary noting that on August 22, 1867, an engineering party surveying a line for the roadbed reached Williamston that evening. Elder Hassell said he called at the hotel to talk with the chief engineer, Gen. W. G. Lewis, and his assistants. The following day he and a number of other interested Williamston citizens accompanied the surveyors as they ran a proposed line for the railroad through the town to the river. Elder Hassell said the railroad was to follow the ravine between New and Old Town until near the river and then curve upward to the Hassell & Williams Steam Mill wharf.

On June 26, 1868, the annual meeting of the stockholders of the railroad was held in the store of C. B. Hassell in Williamston. Directors elected were C. B. Hassell, Joseph S. Staton, H. D. Roberson, D. W. Bagley, Asa Biggs, James Edwin Moore, and

Jesse R. Stubbs. The directors held a meeting afterwards and elected officers of the company. They were Jesse R. Stubbs, president, and Joseph D. Biggs, secretary and treasurer.

General Lewis, chief engineer for the railroad, came back to Williamston on August 26, 1868, to make his headquarters here while surveying and laying out a definite right-of-way for submission to contractors for bids. His wagons, equipment, and the remainder of his surveying party arrived in Williamston the next day to begin work. A meeting of the stockholders was held at the courthouse on September 11, with Hassell presiding. It was agreed at that time to run the railroad from the steam-mill wharf on the Roanoke at Williamston, via Flat Swamp and Bethel, to a point in the Dancy field about a mile from Tarboro. The question of crossing the Tar River above or below the county bridge at Tarboro was to be decided at a future meeting, after more definite cost estimates had been secured.

Some preliminary figures on estimated costs had been submitted to the stockholders by General Lewis, the chief engineer. He had submitted two plans, one calling for the railroad to run from the Roanoke River to a point east of the Tar River at Tarboro, the other plan about the same, except that the railroad would cross the Tar into Tarboro and connect with the Tarboro branch line of the Weldon & Wilmington Railroad running to Rocky Mount. The shorter line would cost an estimated $251,543.57, while the one going into Tarboro after crossing the Tar would cost an estimated $279,289.90. The cost estimates included everything: clearing, excavation, iron rail, equipment, depots, warehouses, engineering, and supervision of the work.

A breakdown of the estimated cost of the more expensive line, running on into Tarboro, shows the following: 90,566 cubic yards of excavation at 13 cents, $11,773.58; 170,575 cu. yds. of embankment at 13 cents, $22,174.75; 868,394 feet of trestle, drains, cattle guards, etc., at $30 per 1,000 ft., $26,051.82; 618 cu. yds. of masonry at $9, $5,562; 240 ft. Howe truss bridge at $32, $7,680; 80 ft. girder bridge at $11,880; 2,206 tons of rails at $52, $114,712; 13,725 ft. of chain at 51 cents, $6,999.75; 164,700 lbs. of spikes at 4 cents, $6,588; 82,350 crossties at 20 cents, $16,470; track laying at $300 per mile, $9,500; four warehouses, ticket offices, and water stations, $4,285; wharf at Roanoke River, $1,000; two locomotives, 18 tons, cylinder 14x20, $16,421; one passenger coach, $2,857; one baggage and express car, $1,785; 20 box freight cars at $575, $11,500; 10 flat cars at $425, $4,250; four crank cars, $300; repair shop and engine house, $1,500; engineering and general superintendence, $47,000; total $279,289.90.

If the cheaper route was selected, the estimated cost was $251,543.57; the difference of $27,746.33 being largely accounted for by the cost of building the trestle and steel bridge over the Tar River at Tarboro, plus the slightly longer mileage. The longer route was eventually selected, and the western terminus was made at the Wilmington & Weldon depot in Tarboro, where connections were made with the branch line running to Rocky Mount and the main line of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad.

Clearing and grading of the right of way for the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad actually got underway around April 1, 1869, a brief article in the Tarboro Southerner of that date reporting that General Lewis, chief engineer for the railroad, had received a letter from John D. Whitford, agent for the contractor, saying, "It is my purpose to visit you some time this week to vigorously set the ball in motion towards the building of your road." To which the Tarboro paper added, "We sincerely trust it is not another false alarm."

On April 22, 1869, the same newspaper reported, "It is with pleasure that we learn from General Lewis that work has really started on the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad. H. D. Roberson has taken under contract a section of the road near Robersonville and is now engaged with a large number of hands in grading. It is expected that the whole line will be under contract in a short time and that the road will be pushed rapidly to completion. Preparation for the construction of the bridge over the Tar has already begun, and lumber for the same is now being secured."

According to an entry in the Hassell dairy, clearing of the right of way at the Williamston end of the project got underway on May 27, 1869, when "Captain Robinson arrived from New Bern with about 60 hands to go to work on the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad." Four days later, on June 1st, Mr. Hassell records that he went with General Lewis, General Stubbs, D. W. Bagley, James Edwin Moore, and others along the line of the railroad from Williamston to near Stephen Peal's, which was as far as the workmen had cut the trees at that time. On June 3rd he reported that he and a clerk were "rationing the railroad hands." He said the work was going fairly well at that time, with about 100 men on the job. The steam tug "Lane" arrived that day with a barge that carried tools and provisions for the railroad workmen.

The State of North Carolina had authorized issuance of $300,000 in bonds as a loan for building the railroad, and it was about this time that they were sold on the bond market in New York through John F. Pickerell, later referred to as "the contractor." Bonds were selling at a discount at that time, and the entire $300,000 worth of North Carolina bonds brought only $164,948.47 in cash to the railroad. There were allegations of shady dealings by "carpetbaggers" in connection with the bonds, and there was an investigaton by the legislature in 1870. At that time, Gen. Jesse R. Stubbs of Williamston headed the railroad company, and he testified at some length about the company's finances, all of which appeared to be in order so far as he and the local people connected with the railroad were concerned. However, in 1879, the legislature adopted another act, interest on the bonds being in default at that time, authorizing exchange of the old bonds for new ones at the ratio of one-third of a new bond for one of an old bond.

Progress on the work of clearing the right of way and grading was reported in the Tarboro newspaper several times during the early part of June, 1869. On the 3rd it was stated that 100 workmen were engaged in the work at Williamston; 40 at Robersonville, under the supervision of H. D. Roberson, with more than a mile completed; and about 20 at the Tarboro end, making in all about 175 employed at that time. It was said the force would be materially increased in a short time. The newspaper also said that no difficulty had been experienced in securing all the work force needed and that, if needed, a thousand men could be speedily put on the job. The first six miles from the Roanoke River were the most difficult, it was stated, the work over the remaining distance being of very light character.

The line of the railroad was finally decided at the annual meeting of stockholders on June 14, 1869. It was to run from the "old mill wharf" at Williamston through Robersonville, Bethel, and Little Creek, crossing the Tar River at Tar Landing and passing up Mill Creek to connect with the Tarboro-Rocky Mount branch road of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad. The following were elected directors for the ensuing year: Gen. J. R. Stubbs, C. B. Hassell, J. Edwin Moore, John R. Lanier, H. D. Roberson, Jos. S. Staton, and Joseph B. Coffield. At a meeting of the directors the same day, J. R. Stubbs was again elected president; W. G. Lewis, chief engineer and superintendent; Jos. D. Biggs, secretary and treasurer. Wm. A. Weathersbee and R. C. Brown were appointed to the committee on finance, Dennis Simmons being added later by the directors. Henry A. Brown of New Bern was appointed assistant engineer. Other actions included adding $600 to the salary of the chief engineer for the past year and fixing his salary at $2,500 for the next year instead of $200 per month; increasing the salary of the secretary-treasurer from $300 to $500 for the year, and fixing the salary of the president at $3,000 per year.

Continued progress on the railroad was reported at intervals for the next year. On September 2, 1869, it was stated that subcontracts had been let for clearing and grading the entire route and that about 300 men were then engaged in the work. About 15 miles, or roughly one-half of the railroad, had been graded on that date. Then, on November 4, of that year, General Lewis said the entire line had been graded with the exception of about three miles. Stockholders were also notified that an installment of 45 per cent of the stock subscribed was due as of November 1st. The first spike was driven on Tuesday, January 17, 1870, on the Tarboro end of the project. It was again reported that the entire route had been graded and that the track would be laid to Tar River from the depot in a few days, with work to be started on the bridge immediately. It was also said that a full quota of cross ties, spikes, and other necessary material was on hand, and the balance of the railroad iron, about 50 tons, was expected to arrive the following week.

A bill was passed in the 1870 legislature authorizing the railroad to issue first mortage bonds. The Tarboro newspaper hailed this action with pleasure, explaining that it assured without doubt the speedy completion of the line. It said the track at the Tarboro end had been entirely completed from the branch depot to the river and work would be started on the bridge over the Tar that week, the contractor being confident of finishing the job within 20 days. As soon as that was completed, the work of laying the track along the whole route was expectd to be commenced and vigorously carried on.

In the same issue, however, the paper had some criticism of the spirit prevailing in Williamston, as follows: "The spirit of progressive advancement, unfortunately, does not seem to be imbibed to any great extent by the citizens of Williamston, as but few indications of improvement were to be noticed, and the place wears a dull, listless look, not far removed from the destitute condition in which it was left at the close of the war. The inhabitants, however, are looking for a good time coming and anticipate a glorious era of success and prosperity when the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad shall reach their place. They regard this road as a great lever that is to raise their town from its present stagnant position and place her on the high road of prosperity. It cannot be denied that there are many plausible reasons for the expectations, and we trust they will be fully realized, infusing new life into her citizens, and enabling the old borough a fair chase with her sister towns."

The annual stockholders' meeting of the railroad was held in the courthouse at Williamston on June 13, 1870, with D.W. Bagley the unanimous choice for chairman. After approval of the reports of the president, chief engineer and superintendent, secretary-treasurer and the finance committee, dirctors were electd for the ensuing year as follows: J.R. Stubbs, J.B. Coffield, C .B. Hassell, Joseph S. Staton, Henry D. Roberson, J. Edwin Moore, and John Lanier. Fred Phillips and Wm. A. Weathersby were unanimously chosen members of the finance committee by the stockholders, and at the following meeting of the directors, Dennis Simmons was named the third member of the committee. Officers reelected by the directors were J.R. Stubbs, president; W.G. Lewis, chief engineer and superintendent; and, evidently, Joseph D. Biggs, secretary.

An item in the Tarboro Southerner of September 14, 1870, said: "The Williamston & Tarboro Railroad is still being pushed on, about half or three-quarters of a mile of track being laid each day." Evidently the company began experiencing financial difficulties shortly afterwards, as very little additional work was done and a controversy developed between the railroad's officials and Mr. Pickerell, "the contractor." On January 12, 1871, the Southerner said editorially: "The friends of the above road [Williamston & Tarboro] and the public generally have, no doubt, come to the conclusion that it probably will never be completed under the present management....A project is now on foot among the merchants of Tarboro and shippers along the line to complete the road for the purpose of preventing any other opposing line from buying it, thereby hoping to protect themselves in the matter of freight."

Under the heading "Prospects Brightening," the newspaper reported on March 30, 1871: "Friends of the [W. & T.] road will be glad to learn that there are now some prospects of work being resumed and pushed to completion. The delay has been the result of a misunderstanding between Mr. Pickerell and the officials of the road. Both parties have agreed to leave all the matters in dispute to the arbitration of Geo. W. Grice, president of Portsmouth [Va.] National Bank. We learn from the Roanoke News that on Wednesday last, General Lewis, president of the road, Hon. Kemp P. Battle, attorney for the road, Col. Walter Clark, attorney for Mr. Pickerell, and Col. John D. Whitford, financial agent, passed through Weldon en route to Norfolk, where they were to meet Mr. Pickerell from New York. The amount invested is large, and the discusson has occupied several days, with no decison in the case yet. The road has received $450,000 of Convention Bonds as state aid."

Several attempts were made to hold the annual stockholders' meeting in June and July, 1871, but not enough stock was represented to constitute a quorum, and no official business could be transacted. By that time W. G. Lewis, who had previously been chief engineer and superintendent of the railroad, had become president, when and by what method is not shown in the records. He presided at attempts to hold annual meetings on June 12, July 10, and July 20, but "in consequence of the non-representation of the stock recently purchased at public auction, there was no quorum present." There were some informal discussions of the affairs of the company, including a report of Maj. George W. Grice, of Portsmouth, Va., referee in the case in arbitration between the W. & T. R. R. Co. and John P. Pickerell, contractor.

In a letter to the editor of the Southerner, dated July 26, 1871, the president of the railroad, General Lewis, wrote: ". . . The board of directors appointed a committee to open negotiations with other parties to take the entire assets of the road in hand, bonds and all, and build and run the road . . . . It was conceded that the bonds that the company was entitled to by Major Grice's award were almost valueless, on account of the incomplete condition of the road, therefore the company could not complete its road without the assistance of some other corporation whose endorsement would make the bonds good—or which would be willing to take the assets and build and run the road . . . . A committee of two was appointed by the board to assist the president in making such an arrangement as would be satisfactory to the directors and stockholders."

The shaky financial condition of the railroad is reflected in the following excerpts from an article in the Southerner about the situation of the company at the Tarboro end of the project: "At the commencement of construction, several citizens of the town (Tarboro) consented to grant a right of way through their lots on condition that suitable culverts be erected and a street be opened and properly graded. Owing to the failure of the contractor to comply with his obligations, the company has been unable to meet these conditions, and the street from the river to the depot remains incomplete.

"Some weeks since, William S. Battle, in front of whose dwelling the road runs, and who is more largely interested than any other persons, notified authorities of the road that unless the contraact was complied with or put in process of accomplishment within 15 days, he would take possession of his property, obstructing passage over the line. At the expiration of the time he did take possession and, we understand, took up one rail. Since then an injunction has been granted by Judge Moore, restraining him in this matter, which injunction is returnable at the next term of Edgecombe Superior Court, when the question will be finally decided."

It was not too long after this that the railroad company went into bankruptcy, a brief item in the Tarboro newspaper on May 30, 1872, stating that at a meeting of creditors of "the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad, bankrupt, J. Edwin Moore, of Williamston, was appointed assignee." The Southerner, a bitter political opponent of Governor Caldwell at that time, then added the following notes about the governor and the appointment of the assignee: "There are some matters connected with this affair which place Governor Caldwell in a most unenviable light. He represents what is supposed to be the state's interest and endeavored, by what he considered, no doubt, a keen trick, to have appointed A. M. Moore, brother of Judge Moore. With a meanness too small to be indulged in by a governor, he concealed his purpose with the view of deceiving those having the affairs in charge, but they were too smart for him and his little game was spoiled."

The next mention of the railroad is contained in an entry in Elder Hassell's diary under the date of November 12, 1873. He said Lawyer (Maj. H. J.) Rogers, as attorney for "Bayne and others" who had bought the railroad's assets, was in town that day and conferred with him for a while. Hassell stated that the attorney was on his way to Raleigh to have a new act of incorporation granted by the legislature for the railroad. This can be taken to mean that the railroad had been taken over by the bondholders and other northern interests. Prior to that time the right of way for the entire line had been surveyed, cleared and graded; and approximately seven miles of track at the Tarboro end of the project had been completed by the installation of the iron rail, although no work on the bridge over the Tar River was ever started.

This just about marks the end of the history of the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad, plans for which were conceived with such high hopes and enthusiasm by the people of Martin County. The line never operated even the first train and ended up with a mountainous debt, seven miles of rusty track, much of which had to be taken up and replaced when work on a new road was started some six years later, and about 33 miles of cleared and graded right of way which was to be overgrown with weeds and bushes before a new firm could be organized to put it to use.

The Seaboard & Raleigh Railway Company was incorporated by the North Carolina General Assembly in December, 1873, as reported by the Tarboro Southerner on February 20, 1874 and evidently the New York lawyer Rogers, who had stopped off in Williamston to talk with Elder Hassell in November, 1873, was made vice president and chief executive officer of the company. He is the man with whom Martin County and Tarboro people dealt when talk about resuming work on the railroad project became something more than conversation along toward the latter part of 1877 and early 1878.

In October, 1877, it was reported in the press that Major Rogers, on behalf of the Seaboard & Raleigh Railroad, said his company would sign an agreement to raise $25,000 in New York if people along the line would subscribe for $50,000 worth of the firm's bonds, the company also agreeing to finish laying the track and begin operating the railroad. This brought about renewed interest in the project, and a number of meetings were held in towns along the line in an effort to secure subscriptions for the bonds. However, it was the latter part of 1879 before any progress was made in getting the work actually underway.

Elder C. B. Hassell has several entries in his diary during October, November, and December, 1877, about meetings in connection with the railroad. On October 31 he and James Edwin Moore went in the rain "amid much mud and water" to Robersonville to confer with a number of gentlemen from Williamston, Robersonville, and Tarboro about renewed interest in the railroad from Williamston to Tarboro. Those attending included George Howard and Fred Phillips from Tarboro, H. D. Roberson of Robersonville, and C. B. Hassell, J. E. Moore, J. R. Lanier, and J. L.

Ewell from Williamston, plus a few others. They decided they had been misled by Major Rogers, vice president of the Seaboard & Raleigh Railway Company, and decided to get in touch with him with a request for him to return to North Carolina and set everybody straight about what would be required to resume work on the railroad.

Elder Hassell recorded in his diary that Major Rogers and Captain McCorkle, the latter an engineer for the railway company, arrived in Williamston November 26 for a conference with him, James Edwin Moore, and John R. Lanier. The following day Hassell joined Rogers and McCorkle, Henry D. Roberson, and Thomas Andrews, the latter two from Robersonville, and went with them to Bethel for a joint meeting with Howard and Phillips of Tarboro. The meeting was held in the office of Doctor James, Hassell reporting that the program agreed upon called for a bond subscription of $50,000 and a material and labor subscription of $20,000 for completion of the road from Williamston to Tarboro. His diary of December 13, 1877, said he attended a meeting with about a dozen people in the courthouse at Williamston, where subscriptions of $1,100 in money and 1,500 crossties were received.

The first definite commitment publicly made by officials of the Seaboard & Raleigh Railway Company is contained in an article published on February 7, 1878, in the Tarboro Southerner, as follows: "Maj. H. J. Rogers, vice president of the Seaboard & Raleigh railroad, and Capt. D. M. McCorkle, chief engineer, arrived in Tarboro on Friday last (February 1) on business connected with the road. The S. & R. R. is an extension of the old W. & T. R. R. Major Rogers makes a proposition to our capitalists that seems perfectly fair. He says if our people will come forward and take $50,000 in bonds, which will be about one-fourth of the entire issue, the company will elsewhere provide the balance of the funds necessary to build and equip the road to Williamston. The subscribers to the $50,000 will not be asked to pay anything until five miles of the road have been laid, and then only as each additional five miles are laid, thus securing to them the completion of the road before the money is paid. The subscription shall only be called for by a committee composed of the president, engineer, and two North Carolina directors to be designated by the subscribers.

"Now, a subscription of $50,000 will equip (put in running order) the road from Tarboro to Williamston and from Bethel to Greenville.

"We publish the following memorandum of conditions offered by Major Rogers. We bespeak an attentive persual and hope to have the views of leading citizens of Martin, Pitt, and Edgecombe Counties next week: 'Memorandum of conditions for subscription to railroad from Williamston to Tarboro, with branch from Bethel to Greenville:

"'1st. Bonds not to exceed $6,000 to $8,000 per mile, inclusive of all the rolling stock. Interest to commence to run July, 1878. Coupons receivable for freight and fare.

" 'Parties subscribing for said bonds shall make payment for same as follows: Upon the completion of the first five miles of the road—other than that now completed, of about seven miles—the first installment of one-fourth of said subscription shall be paid. Upon the completion of the second section of five miles, the second installment of one-fourth shall be paid, and so on in like manner until whole payment of subscription is made. It is understood that no subscription shall be binding, unless the sum of $50,000 is subscribed for, in addition to the amount of $25,000 pledged in New York.

" 'The North Carolina subscription to be payable only on call of a committee composed of the president, engineer in charge, and two North Carolina directors. Bonds issued in amounts of $100, $500, and $1,000.' "

The Tarboro newspaper took up active sponsorship of the railroad and ran numerous editorials calling for people not only of Tarboro but throughout the entire three counties through which the line was to run to rally to its support by purchasing its bonds. The response, however, was not too good, and little progress was made until March 11, 1879, when an act was ratified issuing $50,000 in new bonds to be exchanged for the $150,000 in convention bonds issued by the state in 1868, proceeds to be used for completion of the road. Martin County's representative in the General Assembly at the 1879 session, Henry D. Roberson of Robersonville, had introduced the bill in February and fought it through to successful conclusion in March, according to the Southerner, who gave him full credit for his efforts. In the same issue the Tarboro newspaper said a bill had passed the house "and will pass the senate" authorizing 50 convicts to be used on the railroad when work was resumed. This is the only mention of convict labor being used on the line.

Some construction work on the railroad began in the latter part of 1879, this time starting on the Roanoke River end of the line, at what was called the "railroad wharf." Practically all the materials, including rails, spikes, and various items of equipment, were brought up the river by the steamer "Conoho," operated by the Roanoke, Norfolk & Baltimore Steamboat Company, which continued to operate and connect with trains for a number of years after the railroad was completed.

The first locomotive for the new railroad was also brought by steamer to Williamston. Affectionally called "Jumbo," the little engine, used only in construction work, was of the upright type, with "cowcatchers" at both ends. Its engineer was Capt. Ed Rand, who also was engineer of the first train after the railroad was completed; and Capt. John W. Cotton, Sr., of Tarboro, was conductor. The first fatal accident occurred on one of the first trips of "Jumbo," when an old colored woman, Cheaney Staton, a former slave of McGilvary Staton, was run over and killed on or near the curve just below where the courthouse now stands.

It was about this time that distracting schemes affecting the railroads began to develop in this county. The Jamesville & Washington Railroad was already in operation between those two towns, and Abraham Fisher, its chief executive officer, indicated some interest in a proposal to construct a branch of his line from Dymond City to Robersonville, and possibly on to Tarboro, with an extension to Plymouth at some future date. People in both Robersonville and Tarboro seemed to be intrigued by the idea, especially since interest at Williamston in the Seaboard & Raleigh Railway apparently was marking time just then. Fisher even made a trip to England late in 1877 or early in 1878 to discuss the matter with his stockholders. He returned in March, 1878, and there was some talk about a survey being made between Robersonville and Dymond City, but interest died down gradually as more enthusiasm began to develop in Martin County for the Williamston to Tarboro route.

Although work on the Williamston to Tarboro railroad was resumed in the latter part of 1879, it went along very slowly until early in 1882, when things finally fell into place and started moving the way they had been planned. A series of meetings were scheduled at towns on the route: in Tarboro on February 14, Bethel February 15, Robersonville February 16, and Williamston February 17. These meetings were arranged in an effort to induce people along the road to subscribe for stock to be paid for in crossties. It was stated that a shipload of railroad iron had left England and would soon arrive in the United States for the railroad, and it was hoped to have a sufficient supply of crossties on hand to lay the track when the rails arrived. It was stated that the railroad would pass through a heavily wooded section, with plenty of trees readily available.

People on the Tarboro end of the project received a jolt in March, 1882, when serious consideration was given a proposal to route the railroad by Old Sparta to Wilson, instead of going through Tarboro to Rocky Mount. Tarboro people, like those in Williamston, were not subscribing to the bonds in the manner expected. Elias Carr, of Edgecombe County, who was to be governor of North Carolina from 1893 to 1897, was one of the sonsors of the movement to route the railroad through Old Sparta and Wilson to Raleigh, and he called a meeting to order at Old Sparta on March 24, 1882, at which $3,500 was pledged with the assurance of much more. Williamston and Tarboro managed to stave off the plans to bypass them, however, and throughout the spring and summer work went on at an accelerated pace on the original route.

Construction work on the railroad began speeding up in early March of 1882. A letter to the Tarboro newspaper editor from Joseph Sitterson of Williamston, dated March 5, stated that several miles of the road-bed in the section were ready to receive crossties "now rapidly coming in"; actual track laying was to begin in a few days. The preceding Saturday a steam barge loaded with iron for the road had arrived at Williamston and much more was said to be on the way. Col. C. L. McAlpine, engineer in charge of the work at the Williamston end of the project, said he would have a hard time to get the iron on hand out of the way in time for the next boat load.

The Norfolk Public Ledger reported on March 4 that the schooner "F. Merwin" had arrived there with a cargo of iron for the Seaboard & Raleigh Railroad. It was to be reshipped, via the Albemarle & Chesapeake Canal, to Williamston. About the same time Major Rogers, vice president of the S. & R., expressed the opinion that the road would be completed in July. He said any delay would be caused by a shortage of laborers. Only 50 were on the job at that time, he said, and 125 would be needed to complete the road within 40 days. He said an additional 50 were expected that week from Edenton.

In a brief note to the editor of the Tarboro newspaper, dated March 28, 1882, Major Rogers said the work at the Williamston end had been held up some by unfavorable weather and a shortage of crossties. He said he had just reached Williamston "after a hard day's work through the mud and rain" and made a thorough inspection of the newly graded portion of the road. Three cargoes of iron had been received and Rogers expressed the belief that the difficulty in getting crosstis had been overcome.

The Southerner in its issue of June 15 reported that work on the railroad was progressing very favorably. Nearly 200 feet of embankment and 10 sections of the trestlework at Tarboro had been completed. The seven miles of old track laid by the old Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company had been taken up, and Mr. Maloney, engineer, had about 30 men at work getting the roadbed at that end of the line ready for the new iron. At Williamston two miles of track had been laid, with an engine and five cars then at work on the track. About a month later, on July 27, it was reported that another engine had been shipped from Norfolk to Williamston and was expected to arrive soon.

On August 3, 1882, the editor of the Tarboro newspaper made an extensive report of a trip he had made from Tarboro to Williamston in company with Major Rogers, vice president of the railroad. Excerpts from his report, concerning the railroad and sundry other matters, follow:

"The railroad runs almost entirely through cultivated land with houses on one side or the other every few hundred yards. We have not the slightest doubt that the local freight on this road will pay better than any other route in the state for the same distance.

"From Tarboro to Williamston ample evidences of prosperity are visible. The near completion of the road is waking up the sleeping villages and hamlets. New buildings are going up at Bethel by the dozen; farmers are repairing or building houses; Williamston has caught the mania and several buildings are in process of erection, with two exceptions, the first time in 20 years.

"Robersonville has a population of a few hundred. A dozen years ago the site of the town was a pine forest. Since then there has been this change. The houses are all new and painted. It is undoubtedly the prettiest village on the road. It is named for Col. Henry D. Roberson, one of the most public-spirited and enterprising citizens in the South. In fact, Robersonville is the work of this one man, and is a fitting monument to him who has fought life's battle and so far has been victorious. There is a flourishing school; the schoolhouse was built by him alone. The pretty little church of the Disciples—free to all, however—was also built by this man. This will be a considerable town; quite a number of people are now trying to buy lots for stores and dwellings. The station between this place and Williamston will be at S. P. Everett's, justice of the peace, one of the most popular men in the county. Mr. Everett is building a large store which will be next to the railroad warehouse when it is built.

"The track is laid as far as Mr. Burrough's. We sent our conveyance to Williamston and boarded 'Jumbo,' the construction engine, for a ride over the completed portion of the road. The work as far as it goes has been well done, and is in first-rate condition. One hundred men are engaged in laying track, surfacing, bridging, etc., while 110 men are grading the track between Robersonville and Bethel under the supervision of J. E. Board, assistant engineer, who is doing his work very well. Iron has been laid on the line for a distance of five or six miles. There are enough crossties to lay the track as far as graded. The heaviest part of the work has been done, and if sufficient energy is thrown into the work, the work should be completed by the middle of October, at the latest. Our reasons for arriving at this conclusion are these: the length of the entire route is 34 miles. There will be seven miles of the road laid from this end of the line, which will leave only 27 miles to be completed by those working at the other end. Six miles of this 27 are already done, so that only 21 miles will have to be laid now. One-half mile a day is only a fair average, but if only one-third of a mile is laid, this will still complete the road before the middle of October.

"We would advise the management to push things. The fall freights will amply repay them. The people of that section will want to market their crops about the time the road should be done. If the road is ready, it will be taxed to its full carrying capacity. Again, the Baptist association will meet here the first part of October. Hundreds of Baptists in Martin County will attend if the road will take them. The fair will be held here the last of the month; thousands will attend them. The fair will be held here the last of the month; thousands will attend. The management will be working against itself if it does not see that the road is completed with all dispatch possible."

One of the major projects in connection with building the railroad was crossing the Tar River at Tarboro. It was announced on May 25 that carpenters would commence work on the bridge there the following day. Work had already been started on the embankment leading to the trestle and was said to be making good progress. Glaskin & Company, of New York, was the contracting firm for the bridge, and Francis R. Coffee was engineer in charge of the work. Some of the technical details of the bridge were outlined in the Tarboro Southerner on August 24, 1882, as follows:

"The bridge proper consists of four spans of 40 feet and four spans of 30 feet, or a total length of 280 feet. Each pier for the support of these spans is built on six piles driven at the angular points of a hexagon, the axis of which along the road measures 11 feet, while the transverse is 22 feet in length. The piling was driven by a 15-horsepower engine, the hammer weighing 2,000 pounds with a fall of 20 feet, at a rate of 7 strokes every 58 seconds. The piling was to be driven to such depth as to be capable of supporting a safe load of six tons upon each pile. It was cited that each pile was tested when driven, and in no case did the test fall short of 23 tons, while in one case it was as great as 63 tons.

"When driven, the heads of piling are sawed off below the level of ordinary low water, or 34 feet below rail level, and on these are placed two sills across and one up and down the stream. The six supporting standards are tenoned into the sills, each receiving a certain batter which enables them to meet in groups of three, at two points under the caps, to which they are secured by trestles and knife-edged joints. The upstream faces of the piling are sheeted with plank, which forms a cut-water and prevents the lodgement of floating debris around the structure, which frequently is a large item in assisting the destruction of bridges and similar structures.

"The trestlework and embankment which form an addenda to this structure have been completed. The former consists of 46 spans of 12 feet 6 inches each, and the latter a little over 700 feet in length and averages 17 feet in height. When completed, the bridge will be as substantial a wood structure as can be found in the country."

One of the few remaining obstacles to begin operating the railroad was removed on Friday, September 29, 1882, with completion of the Tar River bridge, the first train moving over it about

7 o'clock that evening. It has been announced previously that the first train would cross the bridge at 5 p.m., but the engine ran off the track on the W. & W. road and was delayed two hours, disappointing a crowd of 500 or more who had gathered to witness the event. When the train did go over, the Southerner reported, "not a quiver or tremor was perceptible."

To compensate the people for their disappointment, the following morning, Saturday, at 11 o'clock, the engine and four flat cars, loaded with excursionists, were run across the bridge, the engine being decorated with wreaths of flowers as a compliment to Fred Hanks, the engineer, thanks to Mrs. Margaret Cobb, Mrs. Caroline Johnston, Miss Erin Mehagan, Messrs. R.N. Mehegan and F.L. Bond. The train stopped at the end of the track on the other side, where F.L. Bond made a brief address, concluding with calls for thanks and cheers for the officers, engineers, and workmen of the railroad, evoking an enthusiastic response from the assemblage.

With the railroad nearing completion, plans began developing in the early part of October for employment of the operating personnel. An item in the Southerner on October 5 reported that Major Rogers, vice president, accompanied by Capt. D.P. McCorkle, formerly connected with the road as chief engineer, Peter Dorsch and J.R. Petty, had arrived in Tarboro. Mr. Dorsch had just been appointed general superintendent and was to be in complete charge of operations on the railroad as soon as construction was completed, with Mr. Petty as his assistant. Mr. Dorsch was for a long time connected with the New York Central Railroad, had been superintendent of the Southern Minnesota Railroad and enjoyed a high reputation as a successful railroad manager. Mr. Petty had been connected with the Southside Railroad of Long Island for many years and also enjoyed a good reputation in railroad circles.

A dream that was more than 20 years in developing became a reality on October 17, 1882, when the first train was operated over the entire line of the Seaboard & Raleigh Railroad Company from Tarboro to Williamston. There had been some controversy about which direction the first official run would be made. People in Martin County wanted it made from Williamston to Tarboro, while those on the other end wanted the run to start there. It was finally decided in favor of starting in Tarboro and bringing the train to Williamston. There was no fanfare at all connected with the beginning of service. The only reference to it on record is the following item from the Tarboro Southerner in its issue of October 19. 1882, under the one-word headline "DONE":

"Tarboro and Williamston are now united by iron rails. The first train ran through Tuesday at midday. Let us rejoice. Cheap freights will no longer be a hope; they are reality. Cotton will not cost $1.50 per bale from this place [Tarboro] to Norfolk. The fish and oyster country is open to us. A vast field is opened up to our merchants for a wholesale trade. The dream of General Stubbs [Jesse R., father of the late attorney Harry W. Stubbs of Williamston] and General W.G. Lewis, the men who engineered the road from Williamston to Tarboro, has been realized.

"As the readers of the Southerner read their paper today, the iron horse will be steaming for Williamston with carloads of cotton. Are our people glad? Major Rogers, President Baltzer, Mr. Lichtenstein, Mr. Creecy, the gentlemen who have placed their capital in the enterprise, should have some earnest of our joy."

Although no formal program marked the openig of the entire railroad route, a real celebration had been held in Robersonville over a month earlier, when one section of the route had been completed. The Robersonville correspondent of the Tarboro Southerner wrote that Thursday, August 24, had been set apart as the day for welcoming the "iron horse". He said the ladies of Robersonville had made a number of flags and placed them over the roadbed the evening before, welcoming the Seaboard & Raleigh Railroad to the town. The decorations had a good effect on the workmen, causing them to finish their work sooner than expected.

The work train left Williamston early that morning, pulled by a "new and elegant" locomotive of 35 tons, bringing the chief engineer, Col. C.L. McAlpine, a large number of workmen and citizens of that place. Col. McAlpine was on his way to Tarboro, but remained in Robersonville until the track laying there was completed. However, he was unable to await arrival of the second train, whch was to be the signal for the celebration to begin. The train had returned to Williamston, picking up railroad iron and timbers for the Flat Swamp trestle, as well as a number of invited special guests. It made the return trip to Robersonville in 33 minutes, with one stop on the way, arriving there about 12 o'clock amid cheers and applause by the "generous and hospitable citizens of our town."

After the passengers had detrained in Robersonville, the Rev. Henry Winfield, speaking on behalf of Henry D. Roberson, host for the dinner that was to follow, made a brief address of welcome to the assemblage. The response was made by Harry W. Stubbs, promising young attorney of Williamston and son of the first president of the railroad that preceded the Seaboard & Raleigh. Other brief talks were made by J.J. Martin, James Edwin Moore, Colonel Worthington, W.A. Johnson, William Z. Morton, and Capt. J.G. Charles of the Southerner, expressing joy over progress being made by the railroad and grief that three of the route's earliest and most enthusiastic promoters—C.B. Hassell, Jesse R. Stubbs, and D.W. Bagley—did not live to enjoy the happy occasion.

Writer of another letter about the event, this one appearing September 15, 1882, in The Watch Tower, of Washington, a religious publication connected with the Christian Church, said the dinner was thoroughly enjoyed by the special guests, railroad representatives present including Major Rogers, engineers McAlpine, Holbrook, N. Board, J. Board, Colonel Frame, Captain Duffie, and hundreds of workmen and others. Warmest thanks and congratulations were extended to Henry D. Roberson for the ultimate success of his perseverance and untiring efforts to help bring the railroad into being. In addition to local and county people, there were representatives present from Scotland, Ireland, England, Holland, Germany, and many states of the Union, including some from the North and South who were engaged in deadly combat only 20 years before.

The writer also said he had learned that two more engines had arrived in Tarboro to be used on the railroad, one of 38 tons and one of 42 tons, and that work on the track was expected to be completed by the first of October. The day was brought to a close when the train came back up the center of the street, between Outterbridge's and Roberson's stores, blowing "the long whistle" for those making the return trip to get aboard.

One of the men who made the rail trip to the celebration said they rode on flat cars and sparks from the engine created a problem. Some passengers partially solved it by facing each other and slapping out the fires started in the other's clothing by the sparks. Those who remained in Robersonville overnight were guests at a "hop" that night. The following day a number of ladies and gentlemen from Robersonville went on an excursion over the railroad to Williamston and back.

When the railroad began business in October, 1882, the Williamston freight warehouse and main depot was at the river wharf, but the ticket office was located in a small house on the west side of Smithwick Street at the railroad crossing. Capt. John R. Lanier was the first railroad agent to occupy that office, and he held the position until he was appointed Williamston postmaster by President Grover Cleveland in June, 1885. He was succeeded as agent by William A. Ellison, who held the position for more than 30 years.

The telegraph office, operated separately from the railroad, was in the store of Joseph Biggs, Sr., on Main Street. First operator was John R. Dixon, who later retired as chief dispatcher for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company at Norfolk. Charles Watson succeeded Dixon, but remained only a short time before he was followed by John Potts, and the office was then moved to a small house in a corner of the Dennis Simmons lot opposite the location of the present depot building.

While Ellison was agent for the railroad company, he learned telegraphy from Potts; and when Potts was transferred, the telegraph and railroad offices were combined and both jobs were handled by Ellison in a new depot constructed on Railroad Street directly behind the J. A. Everett residence, which fronted on Main Street. The third railroad station was built at the present location but later burned. In its early days, the railroad had two "turntables" in Williamston, one at the river terminal and the other at the triangular intersection of Haughton and Washington Streets about where the present municipal water fountain is located.

While Ellison was railroad agent, a number of Williamston young men learned telegraphy under his tutelage, the following being among them: Henry Hatton, John R. Ellison, K. Robinson, S. R. Clary, James H. Robertson, Eli Robertson, H. H. Pope, Tom Whitley, J. G. Staton, Paul Salsbury. Al Gurkin, John Harrison, Dr. William Robertson, L. C. Godwin, V. D. Godwin, J. H. Thrower, George Williams and Ed H. Hardison.

Rumors of extensions, branch lines, and mergers with other railroads became frequent after the Seaboard & Raleigh began operating in the latter part of 1882. A meeting was scheduled in Greenville on November 25 to discuss the possibilities of getting a railroad. The nearest railroad connection from that point was at Bethel, on the S. & R. and it was believed efforts would be centered on getting a branch line between the two points, a distance of about 12 miles.

An article in the Tarboro newspaper on November 23 hinted at a possible merger of the S. & R. with the Weldon & Wilmington

Railroad, although it admitted it had no solid basis for its speculation. Under the heading "Does It Mean Anything?" the Southerner had the following: "President Bridgers and Superintendent Divine, of the W. & W. road, with Messrs. Waters and Newcome, of Baltimore, virtual owners of the road, paid a flying visit to this place, and in company with Judge Howard, Major Rogers and Superintendent Dorsch, rode over the S. & R. This fact has given rise to much speculation. All that we have been able to learn is that trains on the two roads will make close connections. Through passengers will be transferred at the W. & W. depot. There will be a reciprocal sale of tickets by each road, and a most friendly feeling exists between the two roads, the purpose of both being, as we are advised, to give quick transit and reasonable freights. As we are informed, Messrs. Walters and Newcome came down at the instance of Judge Howard to arrange for permanent and substantial depot accommodations for the W. & W. road, and Major Rogers, as a matter of ceremony, extended the use of his road for a trip to Williamston."

Shortly after the railroad began operating in October, 1882, it was to undergo a name change. It had originally been chartered as the Williamston & Tarboro Railroad Company in 1861; changed by organization of a new company in Decemmber, 1873, to Seaboard & Raleigh Railway Company; and next, on February 7, 1883, it was again changed, this time to the Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad Company. The exact reason for the latter change is not known, but it is believed to have been because of confusion caused by the name "Seaboard" being used by another company. However, this was not to be the last change in the title of the relatively short line. On January 10, 1894, the Albemarle & Raleigh was consolidated with and into the Weldon & Wilmington Railroad Company; and on April 21, 1900, it was merged with and became part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company. It continued under this name for more than 60 years, being changed in 1967 to Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company after the Seaboard Air Line and Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company were consolidated.

When the Seaboard & Raleigh Railroad was chartered, it was planned to extend it all the way to Raleigh, two possible routes being considered later. One was through Tarboro to Rocky Mount and directly from there to Raleigh; the other was from Bethel to Old Sparta and Wilson and then on to Raleigh. Neither plan ever materialized, although after the S. & R. was changed to the Albemarle & Raleigh and consolidated with the W. & W., a branch line was run from Rocky Mount as far as Spring Hope in Nash County; and the Norfolk & Southern later built a direct line from Wilson to Raleigh. Wake County commissioners, at a meeting on July 2, 1883, ordered a subscription of $20,000 to the Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad to be applied to extension of that line to Raleigh. It was noted that the subscription was made at the direction of Little Creek and Mark's Creek Townships in Wake County, which had voted to contribute $10,000 each for the extension. Since the A. & R. never completed the extension, no call was ever made for the subscription.

The first derailment accident to be reported on the A. & R. after its completion occurred about 10 miles east of Tarboro on May 9, 1883, when two freight cars and a passenger coach jumped the track and were badly damaged. There were eight passengers and three railroad men in the coach, which wound up in the ditch alongside the track, but none was hurt, according to the conductor, Captain Cotten. The two freight cars landed in a field. Later it was reported that total damage was only $100. Foul play was suspected in connection with the accident. Later that year, on September 26, Claude Keith of Williamston, passenger on a train, was "severely injured" when struck by a stone thrown into the car in which he was riding at Little Creek, about five miles east of Tarboro. The incident followed an altercation on the train, one of the two men involved getting off at the point where the stone was thrown. Warrants were later issued for two men believed responsible.

In May of 1883, the Tarboro Southerner complained about the schedule of the new railroad in the following manner: "The recent change in the running of trains on the A. & R. road, if what we are told is true, is of no benefit to Tarboro, to the road or any of the towns along its route. As the schedule now is, the trains connect nowhere. They arrive in Williamston a half hour after the boat was left, leave Williamston before the boat arrives, leave Tarboro three hours before the train from Rocky Mount comes in, and arrive back at 9 o'clock in the evening. Our merchants have built up a considerable wholesale trade with the merchants below, especially on this route. Now, for them to make their purchases here, if they come in person, they will be forced to remain here two nights and one day, which is decidedly too long and will surely militate against us without doing any good to other places on the road. In short, those merchants who have heretofore been buying largely from the merchants here, will be forced to go to Norfolk, as a visit to that place can be made in almost the same time that is required to come here and return. We ask him (Mr. Dorsch) to again change the schedule for the benefit of all concerned."

Something entirely new for people along the route of the new railroad came early in May, 1883, when it was announced that J. C. Younger would run a one-day excursion from Tarboro to enable people of the section to attend a Methodist conference scheduled in Williamston on May 27th. The round-trip fare from the various stations on the line would be the usual price for a one-way ticket. The train was scheduled to leave Tarboro at 7 a.m. on May 27, arriving in Williamston at 9 a.m.; returning, the train would leave Williamston at 6 p.m. and arrive in Tarboro at 7:30. It was announced that ice cream and other refreshments could be obtained on the train.

Another excursion was mentioned in an article in the Southerner on July 26, 1883, as follows: "J. H. Petty, the new but popular superintendent of the Albermarle & Raleigh railroad, will commence next Saturday to run excursions from Williamston to this place. Should they pay, they will be continued. It now behooves our people to bestir themselves and offer every inducement to their eastern brethren to visit the town. The people along the route, we are confident, will be pleased. Tarboro is faulty in many respects, but has the best merchants of any town, and they will sell their goods for cash as cheap as they can be sold anywhere in the state. In fact, Tarboro to use an expression frequently applied to her, 'is the cheapest town in this section.' "

About seven years after the line from Williamston to Tarboro was opened, the 22-mile extension from Williamston Junction to Plymouth was completed and service begun in November, 1889. The next extension was from the Parmele junction to Greenville, the line reaching the north side of the Tar River just across from Greenville in April, 1890, where it ended at a temporary station named "Riverton." Shortly thereafter the line was extended across the river and on to Kinston, reaching there in October, 1890. Known as the Kinston branch in later years, the line continued on northwardly through Parmele, Hassell, and Oak City in Martin County to Hobgood, Scotland Neck, and a junction with the W. & W. R. R. main line near Halifax, then on to Weldon in Halifax County. Another branch line from Parmele to Washington was opened in 1892.

The Greenville branch line was first planned to run from Hobgood through Oak City, Hassell, and Robersonville, but land owners in the Robersonville section wanted too much money for a right of way. It was next proposed to run the line from Hobgood through Oak City, Hassell, and Bethel, but again a right of way was said to be too costly through the Bethel region. It was then decided to make the junction point at Parmele, running much of the line through swampland. The little town received its name from Parmele-Eccleston Lumber Company, which had a sizable sawmill operation there for a number of years. It became quite important as a junction point for several branch railroad lines, and in its hey-day as many as eleven passenger trains, as well as numerous freights, passed through it daily. Its importance as a travel center declined with the decrease in passenger traffic, the last passenger trains having been run in the 1940's.

Although the history of the railroad line from Williamston to Tarboro is without doubt the longest and deals with the most successful undertaking of its kind—since it is still in operation after nearly 100 years—one of the most fascinating and dramatic stories connected with railroading in Martin County is that of the company which actually put into operation the section's very first trains. That story also has to do with the birth and development of a town and community, which sprang from the forests and swamps, flourished for a relatively few years, and then faded into obscurity with scarcely a mark of any kind now to show that it ever existed.

The saga begins in 1868, when a group of Pennsylvania men, headed by Richard Waring of Pittsburgh and Henry H. King of Philadelphia, became interested in a tremendous tract of forest land located in Martin and Beaufort Counties, North Carolina. The original patent for the land was issued to John Gray Blount for $5,000 by the State of North Carolina in 1795. It was composed of 39,680 acres of some of the finest timberland in eastern North Carolina, including pine, cypress, and white cedar. The cedar forest was claimed to be the largest of its kind in the south, with trees ranging from one to three feet in diameter.

The General Assembly of North Carolina in February, 1869, chartered the firm under the name "Jamesville and Washington Railroad & Lumber Company," stating that it had been organized "for the purpose of purchasing, holding and improving land in Beaufort, Martin and adjoining counties, and obtaining therefrom any and all timbers . . . (and) shall have power to construct such railroads from the town of Jamesville to their land, and to the town of Washington . . . with the privileges usually granted in this commonwealth to railroad companies."

The company was capitalized at $500,000 shares having a par value of $100, with the privilege of increasing the capitalization of $1,000,000 "whenever the directors shall deem it expedient." The company's main office originally was in Philadelphia, and the office of the operating superintendent was first located in Jamesville. English capitalists put up $300,000 in cash for the undertaking, for which they received first mortgage bonds on the entire assets of the company, the bonds drawing 5 per cent interest. These are believed to have been the first bonds ever issued for any purpose that were secured by property located in this county. Henry King was the first president of the company, and George Everson the first superintendent.

Work was started almost immediately on the railroad and on the firm's two sawmills, one at Deep Run and the other at Waring. The latter settlement was located about eight miles from Jamesville and was later to become known as Dymond City and headquarters for the company's operations, as well as eventually Martin County's famous "ghost town." Waring was named for one of the company's founders who served as president of the firm for a time, while Dymond City was so called for one of the English bondholders named Dymond.

Francis Lightfoot, a Pennsylvania lumber merchant and civil engineer, moved to Jamesville and did the surveying for the railroad route. A wharf was first built at Jamesville, where equipment and materails shipped by steamer could be unloaded and lumber shipped out. There was a six-mile straight stretch of the railraod from Jamesville to Deep Run which Lightfoot surveyed at night, taking his sighting through a transit aimed at a light provided by a burning lightwood knot held by a man in a tall tree. For many years that tree was known throughout the section as the "Six-Mile Pine."

The railroad and mill were put into operation very quickly; the county's first railraod wreck occurred on the short line on January 30, 1871. At that time only about eight miles of the track had been laid, from Jamesville towards what was later to become Dymond City. An indignation meeting was held in Jamesville on February 4, when resolutions were adopted denouncing "as mean, low-life, cowardly, and contemptible the act of some miscreant who placed obstructions across said railroad on the night of the 30th of January last, seriously injuring the passengers on the cars of said road, as well as damaging the property of said railroad company." No details are known about the wreck, other than that passengers were injured (the number and how seriously injured not being known), and that the railroad property was damaged.

Elder Clayton Moore presided at the indignation meeting, George W. Ward was secretary, and the resolutions were drawn up by Maj. Samuel S. Sheperd, Maj. A. A. Crookston, and Capt. George W. Ward. The resolutions, ordered published in the Tarboro Southerner, mentioned that Francis Lightfoot, their "esteemed townsman," was at that time president of the company. Incidentally, the Southerner editorially commented rather bitterly that while the people between Williamston and Tarboro were arguing over the construction of a railroad between the two towns, the "Jamesville & Washington road was already having wrecks."

By March of 1872 the company had established its northern terminal at Jamesville and had constructed something over eight miles of track, to a point just over the Beaufort County line. The northern terminal included some 800 feet of frontage on the Roanoke River, where a wharf, engine house for the locomotive, a warehouse, and a lumber storage yard were built, as well as "a handsome dwelling" for the superintendent. Some of the buildings were destroyed in a fire on February 14, 1881, the loss being estimated at $1,200. The initial rolling stock consisted of two wood-burning locomotives, 18 four-wheel lumber trucks or flat cars, and one small combination passenger coach and baggage car.

The first mill was built at Deep Run, about five miles south of Jamesville. It included a lumber mill, shingle mill, brick plant, living quarters for management and labor, and a boarding house. About two and a half miles farther south, the company built its main mill at Waring, later Dymond City, and both plants had the finest equipment then available. Included were several upright gang saws, said to have been capable of reducing a large log into one-inch planks at one pass, and considered a marvel of efficiency at that time.

Despite its outstanding equipment and plentiful supply of timber, the company began experiencing financial difficulties due largely to mismanagement. Some of the timber-cutting contracts were said to enable common labor to earn up to $50 a day, a drain no company could stand for any length of time. It was about this time that Abraham Fisher entered the picture, a man who as to complete the railroad to Washington and put the firm on a sound operating basis, for a few years at least.

Although he appears on the pages of Martin County history for only a relatively brief span of years, Abraham Fisher was one of its more interesting characters. The exact year of his arrival in Dymond City area is not known, but it is believed to have been around 1872. Of English-Irish descent, he brought his wife and seven daughters to this county after buying some cut-over land from the old J. & W. firm with the intention of farming it. He built a nice home there and called it "Megessa," a coined word formed of the first letters of the names of his seven daughters. Fisher had previously failed at a farming venture lasting three years in the Alexandria colony of the Argentine Republic, managed by a young Irishman named Henry P. Nolan. Nolan was to follow him to Dymond City and marry Fisher's oldest daughter, Maria.

Fisher was not doing too well at farming in this county, and he accepted with alacrity when Richard Waring, president of the J. & W., asked him to go to Pennsylvania to talk over a business proposition. Waring explained the company's precarious financial condition and asked Fisher to go to England and work out the best deal possible with the English bondholders, who were about ready to take over the company. Fisher did so and impressed the bondholders in such manner that they asked him to take over management of the company's operations in Martin and Beaufort Counties. He was not to be paid any salary but was to get whatever profits he could from the one sawmill then in operation and, if possible, to extend the railroad to Washington, then about 13 miles from the end of track near Dymond City.

Fisher managed to put the operation on a paying basis and extended the railroad on into Washington, where the southern terminal was established on the banks of the Pamlico River, the office being located at what is now the southeast corner of Main and Washington streets.

One of the spots included in a tour of Washington in 1975 was the Bryan Winfield House, a three-story "showplace." It was originally built to be the business office and hotel for the short-lived Jamesville and Washington Railroad.

The entire route was opened for traffic on December 1, 1887. At that time, the company owned three locomotives, two passenger cars, a baggage car, and 21 freight cars. The firm listed the value of its real estate at $294,165 and its equipment was valued at $129,102. The bonded indebtedness was $300,000. Directors of the company were E. Priestman, J. J. Dymond, John Wilson, all of Bradford, England, John Sykes of Birmingham, England, William Mild of Warrington, England, and Francis Lightfoot of Philadelphia, Pa. Priestman was president; Abraham Fisher was local manager, and William Bissell was chief engineer, the latter two living in Dymond City. The freight agent was DeWilton Lucas of Washington, N. C. The English interests had again capitalized the company at $500,000 and the bonded debt was still $300,000, with the interest rate continuing at 8 per cent. The bonds were dated 1873 and were to run for 10 years.

For a few years, the railroad and the towns it served enjoyed a measure of prosperity. Besides its buildings in Jamesville, the company built a hotel, a railroad shop building large enough to house a locomotive and two or three cars, and a large three-story structure in Dymond City in addition to a hotel and general office building in Washington, located just off Main Street. Henry P. Nolan had followed Fisher to the United States, married his daughter, and was made postmaster and manager of the company store and post office on the first floor, the residence of Nolan and family on the second floor, and what was called the "Sunday school room," or meeting place, on the third floor. William Bissell, the railroad's engineer, and later superintendent, lived on the second floor of the building in later years.

Hearing that Fisher and Nolan were at Dymond City, a number of English and Irish adventurers they had known at other places came in and out of the community at various times. Some worked in the sawmill, one of whom, named Gates, was killed in an accident there, and others were employed in the railroad shop or in similar jobs. Dymond City was never incorporated, and its population never reached much above 100 in its most prosperous years. The firm employed a considerable number of Negroes in the logwoods and sawmills, many of them housed in company owned small residences located along the railroad tracks in Dymond City.

When the promoters of the Jamesville & Washington Railroad & Lumber Company first suggested a railroad between the two towns, neither of which had railroad transportation, the people in Washington showed very little interest. The president of the new company reported, "When I first visited North Carolina (about 1868), I was struck by the apathy of its people, and their apparent indifference whether we ever built our road or not." Such apathy is understandable, considering the times. Only three years after the end of the Civil War, the South was still suffering from defeat and intolerable conditions imposed by a South-hating Congress; and the experience of its people with carpetbaggers gave them little reason to have confidence in any proposal from Pennsylvania or anywhere else in the North. However, by 1873, with North Carolina back in the Union, the people of Washington were not only interested in the railraod, but were critical of its management for not having extended the line into Washington. A report of the president of the company at that time said: "On both my recent visits, I observed that apathy had given place to the most lively interest. Nearly every man expressed anxiety that we should complete the remaining 10 miles of our road." Some skepticism was expressed by the editor of the North State Free Press at Washington, though. He wrote: "We wish we could see the Jamesville cars come and go each day, loaded to their utmost capacity, but we fear, beginning as it does at nowhere, and ending at a like place ... those wishes will never be realized."

The railroad's good service to the section after its completion is reflected in a letter written by a former resident of Washington who returned for a visit at that time: "Washington is much improved; in fact, the good old town is now going up at a gallop, and promises to get back its former glory ... The growing prosperity of the town can be attributed to the increased and speedy transportation afforded by the Jamesville & Washington Railroad. Pamlico fishermen find a good market for fish that heretofore were unmarketable. Now they realize at least four times as much for the best fish as the home market could command. This brings thousands of dollars to the town, which is impossible without the railroad." The high regard in which the railroad was held is evidenced by the affectionate nickname, "Jolt and Wiggle," bestowed upon the J. & W. by those who rode the little cars over the narrow-gauge uneven track through the swamps.

The railroad possibly became more profitable than the sawmill operations in the late 1770's and early 1880's, as there is little mention of any timber operations. Large quantities of farm products, including cotton, Irish potatoes, and the like, as well as barrels of tar and other naval stores, were hauled from the Pamlico to Jamesville for transshipment by steamer through the Albemarle Sound to Norfolk and Baltimore. A son of Henry P. Nolan, writing to the Williamston Enterprise in 1965, said he did not remember any box cars on the railroad, shipments usually being made on flat cars with sides four or five feet high and covered by canvas to keep the merchandise dry. Shipments originating at Dymond City, usually of cotton or barrels of tar, were brought to the station there in carts drawn by steers or horses, he said.

However, it was as a passenger-carrying operation that the road became most famous. Since it was the first railroad in both Martin and Beaufort counties, it is more than likely that everyone who could possibly afford it took a ride on its trains at one time or another simply for the sheer novelty of it. A new "parlor car" was purchased at a cost of $2,000 and put into use on the line in 1879. A special correspondent of the Tarboro Southerner, writing on December 11 that year, said a ride on it was "smooth and joltless." First and second class passengers rode in the same car, the difference being that second-class passengers were expected to get out and help gather wood when the train started slowing down for refueling.

Abraham Fisher was a devout Quaker, or member of the "Society of Friends," and he had considerable influence on the religious life of his adopted community. One of his granddaughters, in a letter to The Enterprise in 1939, said she never attended any services in the so-called "Sunday school room" in the main building at Dymond City, but usually went to "Megassa," where "Friends" services were held in one of the outbuildings on her grandfather's farm. The late Judge Francis D. Winston of Windsor said Mr. Fisher on numerous occasions paddled a canoe from Jamesville to a landing on the Bertie side of the river, then walked to Windsor and spent the night with the Winstons on his way to attend religious services at a Quaker settlement in Nrothampton County near Woodland. There are numerous stories about Fisher's walking jaunts. On one occasion, he walked the approximately 14 miles from Dymond City to Williamston to deliver a legal paper to James Edwin Moore, a prominent attorney. Reaching into his coat pocket and realizing he had forgotten the instrument, the old gentleman was quoted as saying, "I'll step right back home and fetch it."

The old J. & W. managed to survive several financial crises, but that $300,000 worth of 8% bonds constituted a burden heavier than it could bear, and the due date in 1883 became "judgment day" for the little railroad. On April 22, 1884, legal technicalities were complied with and the entire property, valued at upwards of a million dollars, was sold at public auction for a fraction of its true worth. Money was tight at the time, and the line was kicked around, being sold a couple of times between then and December 28, 1885, when a Philadelphia corporation came into possession of it. By that time, Fisher had resigned and was out as general manager, and William Bissell, chief engiener, either leased it or was put in charge as general superintendent. Fisher lived on in the section for a few years, but after the death of his wife and a fire which destroyed most of the outbuildings and some of his livestock he sold out and moved to Pennsylvania to be near some of his relatives there.

The Guarantee Trust Company of Philadelphia backed purchase of the road in 1885, and took as security $100,000 in first mortgage bonds, that mortgage including everything the company owned: wharves, rolling stock, track, timber, buildings, hotel, everything. First thing the new owner did was to cut all corners and bring the operation down to size. Instead of five locomotives, they sold three and were satisfied with two. They ditched the baggage car and all except seven freight cars. By operating on a very tight budget, the company came up with a profit of $2,426.54 for the first nine months of 1886. Operations were continued for a few more years, more or less on an even keel, although by this time other railroads were beginning to cut in on the business formerly enjoyed exclusively by the J. & W.

At one time, it was seriously proposed that the J. & W. construct a branch line from Dymond City to Robersonville for a junction with the Williamston & Tarboro Railraod at that point. This was in the early part of 1878, when interest in the W. & T. line was said to be at a low ebb, and it is possible the proposal was advanced simply as a threat to bring about a revival of interest in the W. & J. railroad at Williamston, which would have been by-passed if the new suggestion had been carried out. Abraham Fisher took a trip to England to talk over with his bondholders the proposed extension, but nothing ever came of it, and the W. & T. eventually completed its line to Williamston, and later through Jamesville to Plymouth.

The Williamston & Tarboro railroad was completed and began operating in October, 1882, the extension to Plymouth through Jamesville following in November, 1889. It was somewhat later than this that the Norfolk Southern became interested in the Washington & Plymouth Railroad, bought it, and broadened its operations by crossing Albemarle Sound, first by car ferry and later, in the early part of the twentieth century, by bridge. These developments were a little too heady for the J. & W., which, seeing the handwriting on the wall, didn't wait, but made its last scheduled passenger train run on January 25, 1892, and then, in 1897, pulled up its tracks and went out of business entirely.

When the workmen began taking up the track, they started in Washington and worked back toward Jamesville, the steel rails being loaded on flat cars and moved to Jamesville for final shipment via steamer. The swampy area around Dymond City was not too healthy a place to live, and family after family started moving away in the early 1900's, some of them on orders of their physicians. Henry P. Nolan died in 1893 while on a visit abroad and his widow was appointed postmistress at Dymond City. However, she served only a short time, as the office was discontinued on April 17, 1894, and moved to "Amherst," at John Manning's, in Griffins Township.

Dymond City did not last long after the tracks were removed in 1897, and it is believed the families of Nolan and Bissell were the last to leave. The Nolan family was broken up when they left Dymond City, Mrs. Nolan moving to Woodland, N. C., where there was a Quaker settlement among whom she had relatives and friends, while several of the children went to live with relatives in Pennsylvania. Matt Bissell, son of the railroad's chief engineer, left Dymond City but continued to live in Griffins Township until his death in relatively recently years. The deserted little village became a "ghost town," center of some of the finest deer and bear hunting in eastern North Carolina. The buildings burned down one by one, due mostly to forest fires caused by lightning, the last one being the big three-story structure, which was destroyed in early April, 1927. There is hardly a sign or mark today to show that the town ever existed.

After much of the best and most accessible timber was cut out, the original company sold its vast holdings, about 10,000 acres of which were located in Martin County, to parties in Pennsylvania. In the years that followed, there were numerous heirs to the property, ownership being vested in people who lived in various parts of the country. No one seemed to know exactly who did or did not own the thousands of acres. The Roanoke Railroad & Lumber Company came into possession of the land finally, and in 1921 the property was sold to the Jamesville & Washington Land Company.

Tax claims were assessed against the property, and H. A. Vogel bought the property at a commissioner's sale on June 27, 1931.

About a month later Vogel sold the Martin County portion of the property to Ethel Barnes of Buena Vista County, Iowa. Two years after that, the approximately 10,000 acres were bought by L. A. Thompson of Waukesha, Wisc., who announced plans to go into cattle raising on a large scale there. The State Highway Commission graded a road to the old Dymond City site, and a few cattle were put out to graze. The property soon moved back into the speculative realm, however, portions of it being sold to various individuals. Operating on a rising market, several firms became involved in cutting out the timber again, Gaines & Kirkman of Jamesville and Foreman & Blades Lumber Company of Elizabeth City being two of them at different times. Finally, in recent years, the Weyerhaeuser Company succeeded in purchasing the original J. & W. land and took it out of the speculative field. Since then, that firm has built many miles of private roads and fire lanes and drained much of the land to make it accessible for their program of approved forest conservation methods.

Another logging railroad that graduated into a common carrier in Martin County for a brief time was the Hamilton Railroad & Lumber Company, also known as Hitch's Hamilton & Tarboro Railroad, Hitch's Railroad, and various other similar names. Nothing is on record about its operations, although there are some newspaper accounts concerning construction work on the line, which began about the middle of 1887. Frank Hitch, who had extensive timber operations in Virginia and one mill at Hamilton, was backer of the project, but there is some confusion about the names of his associates. Turner and Bridgers, in their "History of Edgecombe County," said the railroad was laid and financed by Whitby & Dixon, a Baltimore firm of commission merchants, and that they put $60,000 in it; while the Tarboro Southerner, on July 14, 1887, said the line, then in construction, was backed by Hitch, Whedbee, and Dickerson.

The Tarborough-Hamilton Railroad chartered by the General Assembly in 1831 is not even remotely connected with the line that was built between the two towns in 1887. First mention of the latter road is contained in an article in the Tarboro Southerner on March 24, 1887, about a meeting at Kill Quick (Lawrence) in Edgecombe County, where it was announced that $6,000 had been raised in the Whitakers section for building a railroad to that place. A survey from Hamilton to Whitakers was recommended at the meeting.

Nearly two months later, on May 19, the Southerner said it then seemed to be certain that a railroad from Hamilton was to be built to Tarboro. Louis H. Pender had made a preliminary survey and found the distance between the two towns to be a fraction over 18 miles. The proposed road was to be routed through heavily timbered areas, passing through Goose Nest (Oak City), near Cherry's store, and through Shiloh stock farm about two miles from Tarboro. There had been some talk about the road crossing the Tar River above Tarboro, the newspaper said, but it was considered most likely that the line would run into Princeville, just across the river from Tarboro, and end there. About three miles of the railroad had been built at that time and was being used to haul logs to the Hitch sawmill in Hamilton. Mr. Hitch was said to have gone to Baltimore to make arrangements for pushing construction of the narrow-gauge road. Possibly it was at this time that Whitby & Dixon got into the picture by advancing $60,000 for the project.

On June 8, 1887, Mr. Hitch employed H. K. Nash, Jr., a civil engineer of Tarboro, to locate the route of the railroad between the two towns. He told Tarboro people at that time that the building of the road would be started at once, the intention being to complete it by October 1 in order to compete for the fall freights. He also stated that his main object was the manufacture of lumber and that he had timber options on some 10,000 acres of land along the proposed route. Those associated with him in the project were said to be more interested in the freight revenue.

On September 29, 1887, the Tarboro newspaper stated there were reports that the Hamilton & Tarboro railroad would stop at Jones' store, about nine miles from Tarboro, due to difficulty in obtaining rights of way over several tracts of land. Because of the exorbitant demands of the landowners, railroad officials had decided to stop the line at that point and use what had been built purely as a logging operation. According to the newspaper grading had been discontinued and the workmen discharged. Mr. Whedbee, one of the owners, was in Hamilton at that time consulting with Mr. Hitch about the advisability of resuming work. People along the route were said to be awaiting the results of the conference with anxiety. It was later learned that the owners had decided to incorporate as the Hamilton Railroad & Lumber Company in order to obtain the rights of eminent domain, which would enable them to secure the right of way by condemnation proceedings.

On October 27th, work on the railroad was being pushed right along. The Southerner said by fair week the line would be in running order from Hamilton to Shiloh, only two miles from the terminus in Princeville. Conveyances were to be sent from Tarboro to Shiloh to bring passengers to the fair and to town. Rates were to be published the following week. Final word on the construction appeared in the Southerner on November 24th. It said grading was completed within a thousand yards from the Princeville end of the bridge, where the depot was to be located, "as convenient as possible without crossing the river." The road ran along the bank of the river for 1,300 yards on an embankment three inches higher than the 1867 highwater mark but 30 inches lower than the point reached by the 1887 flood. Grading was to be completed that week, and it was expected the last spike would be driven by December 15.

Without doubt, the road was completed and operated for a time, although there are no records to this effect. When it started operations, the Albemarle & Raleigh line had been in existence for nearly 10 years and was already offering good connections with freight and passenger steamers at Williamston and Plymouth for Norfolk and more northern ports. This might have been one of the reasons for earlier proposals for the railroad from Tarboro to Hamilton. It is believed the short line did not operate for a very long period and then mostly for hauling logs to the Hitch sawmill at Hamilton. There is still a Railroad Street in Hamilton, however—fairly good evidence that there was such a line there at one time.

In one of the North Carolina yearbooks for the year 1878, there are some brief statistics about a wooden-railed line, named the Halifax & Scotland Neck Railroad, which may have had its southern terminus in Martin County. Entirely a Halifax County operation, the H. & S. N. ran from Enfield to Hill's Ferry, the latter being in Martin County, although its exact location is not known today, and there are no landmarks to show where it existed. The length of the road was 20 miles, with one-quarter of a mile of siding and other track. Chartered in 1872, the gauge was five feet, its rails were wood, and its rolling stock consisted of one locomotive and 10 cars. President was J. R. Tillery of Halifax; secretary and treasurer, N. B. Josey; and superintendent, P. E. Smith. The principal office was in Halifax. That is the entire record of the road; it disappeared right after 1878, and the reprots of 1892 do not list it.

In addition to the railroads that were built and began operations in Martin County between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century, there were numerous rumors and plans for various other similar projects, some of them too far-fetched to attract much credence from the people of the area. And of all those that were planned, projected, discussed, or built, only one remains to this day, the Seaboard Coast Line, which became eventual owner and operator of the Seaboard & Raleigh line and its extensions throughout the county.

There are brief references in early correspondence indicating there was some travel by rail in Martin County prior to the Civil War, but this has never been substantiated. There is also mention of a proposal to connect the Roanoke and Tar Rivers with a canal starting at Hamilton and joining the Tar near Tarboro, but if this ever got beyond the conversational stage there is no record of it. About the time work was resumed in February, 1882, on the railroad from Williamston to Tarboro, there was a newspaper story that Engineer C. L. McAlpine was surveying a route from Williamston to Jamesville. Actually, this road was not built until some seven years later, in 1889, and, considering the difficulty in financing the road then underway from Williamston to Tarboro, it is difficult to understand why the company was considering this extension at that time. It could have been counter-propaganda to offset the threat made a couple of years earlier by the J. & W. to extend its line from Dymond City to Robersonville, by-passing Williamston.

Then, in 1887, when Tarboro already had two railroads—the Albemarle & Raleigh line from Williamston and the Wilmington & Weldon branch from Rocky Mount and work was underway on the Hitch narrow-gauge road from Hamilton, there was published a report that the Albemarle Lumber Company had secured a right of way for a standard-gauge line from Winton to Tarboro. It was generally believed the purpose of this road was to give the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad a Norfolk outlet, and such a line was built eventually.

A Raleigh News & Observer story in late August, 1887, said a prominent official of the Suffolk & Carolina Railraod, then rapidly pushing its line in eastern North Carolina, had been in Raleigh recently. In an interview, it was learned that the road had completed its line from Suffolk southwest through Gates County to Woodley's on the Chowan River in Chowan County. It was proposed to make connections there by the steamer "Olive," which would go down the Chowan across the head of Albemarle Sound and up the Roanoke River to Jamesville, connecting with the former Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad, then owned by the Wilmington & Weldon, and the Jamesville & Washington Railroad. This project apparently was another pipe dream that vanished with the passage of time.

Another proposal for a railroad that never developed as suggested was brought up in April, 1889, when Mr. George, chief engineer of the Norfolk Southern Railroad, revealed to Fisherman & Farmer, a newspaper published in Edenton, his idea for expansion of that line. The engineer said he was then engaged in making a survey for extension of the Norfolk Southern from Edenton to Washington, Kinston, and Wilmington. He began the survey at Edenton, crossed the Chowan at Edenhouse Point, where the bridge would be about one and a half miles long, went on to Jamesville, and was about five miles south of there on the way to Kinston, where the survey would stop then, but be extended on to Wilmington later. The object of the company was to construct a direct coast line from north to south along the quickest and most direct route. Eventually, the Norfolk Southern extended its lines from Edenton across Albemarle Sound, through Washington to Raleigh, with a branch line to New Bern, but it never made it to Kinston and Wilmington, and it never had any trackage in Martin County, except for its spur from Plymouth to the Weyerhaeuser plant in later years.

Coming on into the twentieth century, Dr. J. McLeary of Atlanta, Ga., in October, 1907, wrote to people in this section proposing to build a new railroad from Hamilton to Rocky Mount, via Tarboro. One of his letters to Attorneys Gillam & Gillam in Tarboro concerned application for a charter and approaching town officials along the proposed route about voting on subscriptions to aid in building the road. That was the only mention of the proposal.

The Williamston Enterprise had a story in its issue of February 16, 1912, proposing a railroad from Littleton to Hamilton, via Brinkleyville, Enfield, Scotland Neck, and Palmyra. A Paul Kitchen of Scotland Neck was said to be one of the promoters. The plan never materialized.

The possibility of extending the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Company from Lewiston across the Roanoke River just above Hamilton, thence through Williamston and Bear Grass to Washington, was discussed at a meeting held in Williamston in early March of 1913. W.T. Meadows of Williamston and Frederick J. Roebuck of Poplar Point were active supporters of the proposition. Engineers were said to be making a survey for the proposed road, but it was doomed after a trip to Norfolk on April 1, 1913, by Harry W. Stubbs, B.A. Critcher, and C.D. Carstarphen, who learned that estimated cost of bridging the Roanoke was $250,000.

In the last teens of the present century, there was a rumor that an electric-car line was being considered from Windsor, in Bertie County, across the Roanoke River to Williamston and on through Washington to Beaufort. This was before the proposal was brought up to extend the Bankhead Highway from Norfolk across the Roanoke River here and on to Wilmington. Approval of the latter project shortly afterwards very effectively put an end to the rumors of building an electric-car line.

The railroads serving the county after the turn of the century continued to expand their facilities until competition from autos and trucks began to hit them in the late twenties. About the middle of November, 1906, the North Carolina Corporation Commission ordered a second round-trip passenger train to be operated on the branch line of the Atlantic Coast Line from Tarboro to Plymouth. Then in February, 1914, citizens of Robersonville, Everetts, Williamston, and Jamesvile petitioned the Norfolk Southern Railroad to extend its passenger-train schedule from Edenton to Plymouth to improve its service from there to Norfolk.

The automobile started making its influence felt in the mid-twenties, passenger travel being first to be affected. The Atlantic Coast Line was denied permission by the Corporation Commission on April 5, 1927, to discontinue operation of its "shoo-fly" trains operating between Tarboro and Plymouth, on which the road claimed it was losing money. The company was directed to continue the schedule. The service was begun in 1907, the two trains, Nos. 56 and 57 really being only one, making a round trip each afternoon. The down train reached Williamston at 1:16 p.m., continued on to Jamesville and Plymouth; and, on the return trip, arrived at Williamston shortly before 5 o'clock. It was sometimes called "Fagan's Special," honoring Frank F. Fagan, Williamston banker, who had taken a leading part in having the service established in 1907.

The commission's order to continue the service proved to be only temporary, however. The automobile was destroying railroad passenger service, and the handwriting was on the wall. The railroad made another applicaton to discontinue the trains in

1928. Hearings were held in Raleigh on January 25 and February 24, the company offering figures to show operating costs of the trains for the preceding year totaled $43,000, while revenue amounted only to $13,000. Representatives from Plymouth, Jamesville, Williamston, and Tarboro opposed discontinuance, but the commission ruled in favor of the company, and final runs of the train were made a few days after the hearings, arrangements having been completed by the railroad for handling mail and express by other methods.

The last train, on February 28, 1928, carried only one passenger and a few bundles of express when it reached Willilamston, "Captain" Robert L. Cobb being the conductor in charge. A special guest of "Captain" Cobb was "Captain" Wooten of Tarboro, who had been conductor on the first run of th train about 21 years previously, a time when railroads were at the zenith of their power and influence. "Captain" Wooten had retired July 31, 1921, but up to that time he was well known to everyone who had occasion to ride the "shoofly" between Tarboro and Plymouth. Affable and accommodating at all times, nevertheless he culd be depended upon to get anyone "told off" who dared leave trash or litter in his passenger coaches. He had a special antipathy for peanuts and seemed to regard it almost as a personal insult if a passenger, while eating them, dropped hulls on the floor.

Although passenger service was deteriorating steadily in the 1920's and 1930's, the railroad managed to hold on to a substantial portion of its freight business for a longer period. Under its latest name, the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company continues to handle most of the shipments in the section of items of extra heavy weight and sundry materials in carload lots. Its freight revenues have fluctuated over the years, increasing as the volume handled by water transportation gradually dwindled dropping as trucks began to take over, and rising again when the huge pulp plant was built in the lower part of the county in 1937. At the present time the railroad handles a tremendous volume of timber, pulpwood, and chips for the Weyerhaeuser plant near Plymouth, where it and the Norfolk Southern maintain sizable switching yards in the county.

Unable to defeat the trucks, the railroad in latter years has joined them, operating a number of highway vehicles for distribution of smaller shipments to the various towns in the county. Williamston is now the only point in Martin County that has a full-time station agent, freight to the other towns being handled by vans, except for very heavy items and carload lots. Where the latter items are concerned, cars are placed on the most convenient sidings for loading or unloading by the shippers or consignees.

At one time the railroad company had agents at seven towns in the county, Oak City, Hassell, Parmele, Robersonville, Everetts, Williamston, and Jamesville. There were several other "flag stations" with sidings, freight service there being handled by the station agents nearest them. Williamston has had only seven agents during the 92-year history of the station. John R. Lanier, William A. Ellison, E.A. Lafrage, J.W. Andrews, Verner B. Godwin, Thomas L. Smith, and Robert Turner.

The end of an era for most of the county was reached on June 30, 1939, when the last run was made by a passenger train between Parmele and Plymouth. It was not quite the end of all county passenger-train service, however, as the Eastern Carolina Chamber of Commerce, under leadership of Secretary N.G. Bartlett, prevailed on the railroad company to schedule for a short while an air-conditioned train from Kinston to Rocky Mount, by way of Parmele and Tarboro. This made it possible—and eminently fitting, perhaps—that Parmele, the town which had been created as a junction point by the railroad company and incorporated shortly after completion of the road, should be the last Martin County station to offer passenger service. This was not to be for long, however, and pasengers were carried over less than a dozen miles of track in the county while it was available.

Despite the nostalgia brought about when all passenger train service was discontinued, county people accepted the railroad's decision without active opposition. Frequent and convenient bus service had almost completely supplanted the limited schedules afforded by the "iron horse," and very few were riding the railroads at that time, anyway.

On its last scheduled run into Williamston on the evening of Friday, June 30, 1939, the train came in about an hour late, bringing, among the few passengers aboard, a number of small children from Everetts who were getting their first train ride. Fenner Respass, a local taxi driver, bought the last ticket sold at the station; and Henry Cooke, a former resident who had been visiting in Williamston, was the last passenger to board the train, according to Verner D. Godwin, the agent. Will Huff, an attendant at the station in various capacities for about 40 years, had tears in his eyes as he took the last bags of mail from the railway postal clerk. Employees at the station chatted with members of the train crew for a few minutes before the enginerr sounded two short blasts on the whistle, and the little train backed slowly from the station on its final trip. The crew was dismissed for assignment to other jobs after their arrival in Plymouth later that evening, and the locomotive, passenger and baggage cars returned to Rocky Mount the following morning as part of a freight train.

CHAPTER II

AGRICULTURE

Though it was not primarily settled for its agricultural possibilities, Martin County moved rapidly to the forefront in that field toward the end of the eighteenth century. It continued to gain in importance throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, being ranked in recent years among the top 20 counties of North Carolina in value of crops produced. In 1969 the county was 14th among the 100 counties in total value of the eleven principal farm crops. Martin is among the smaller or average size counties in both area and population, and it also contains a considerable acreage of swamp land and other soils not particularly suitable for agriculture, but still the county is among the leaders in yields of major crops. Recognized for its diversification in agriculture, Martin County has ranked high in the production of cotton, peanuts, corn and tobacco.

The first settlers came to the area primarily because of the abundance of fish and game. They found the Indians cultivating small patches of maize (corn) and tobacco, and the newcomers began doing likewise to provide for their own needs. There were few or no implements except for axes and grubbing hoes, but with them the settlers cleared off some of the forest land to provide for garden plots. If they had wanted to plant crops for commercial purposes there were no markets available and no means of transportation nor roads, but only the rivers and streams—so there was no way to dispose of any surplus products.

It was not until the owners of substantial grants of land started moving in, with their boats, barges, slaves and beasts of burden, that commercial farming began. There is no mention of tobacco or cotton being grown in the area until some years after the first settlers had made their appearance. The production of peanuts was not to begin until near the end of the nineteenth century. Wheat was planted sparingly and other grain crops were seldom mentioned, but sorghum or molasses cane was grown to provide home supplies of "sweetening" shortly after the arrival of the first plantation owners.

Fertilizers were unknown during the early days of farming in the section, and very little attention was given to maintaining the fertility of the soil or even to rotating crops. When a field was "farmed out," it was usually abandoned and a new one was cleared off for cultivation, land being both plentiful and cheap. A little later, feeble attempts were made to maintain soil fertility by the use of compost. Marl was taken from pits, mixed with stable manure and straw, and then placed in the fields in conical or oblong piles for spreading just prior to planting time.

Much of the early agriculture of Martin County was centered in the area along the Roanoke River between what is now Hamilton and Palmyra. There were a number of large plantations in that section and a few others in the vicinity of Williamston and Jamesville. As late as 1779 a tax list showed only 567 persons owning land in the county. Of that total, 214 owned property valued at 1,000 or more pounds sterling, which would be a substantial fortune with today's values. There were 24 persons who had valuations of more than 10,000 pounds each, which probably would put them in the millionaire class today. Most of them lived in the upper part of the county, and their names are those most familiar in the early history of the county.

Each of the great plantations necessarily was self-contained and just about a complete world in itself. In addition to the "Great House," where the mater lived, there would be slave quarters—located some distance away and usually consisting of cabins built in two long rows with a street between—as well as the other necessary buildings, including barns, stables, packhouses or storehouses, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, smokehouse, and the loom house. Implements, furniture, and much of the cloth for clothing were made right on the plantation.

In connection with the farming operations, many of the early settlers were also engaged in the production of tar, pitch, and turpentine from the pine forests, and wood staves and shingles from some of the hardwoods. Tar was the principal item of export for many years, and as late as 1734 it was quoted at 10 shillings per barrel. The price declined to lower levels between 1735 and 1740, and production virtually stopped then for a time.

The decline in fertility of their lands along the south side of the Roanoke River caused a number of early settlers to move farther into the interior to seek fresh land for their crops, cattle, and hogs. They left their old farms, including houses, barns, orchards, gardens, pastures, and cleared land. Their new farms were smaller and the newcomers usually bought them for about 30 or 40 pistoles (Spanish coins worth about $4 each); they were also required to pay quit rents of about one shilling for every 50 acres.

According to Turner and Bridgers' History of Edgecombe County, a single Virginia planter, Elisha Battle, bought eleven adjacent plantations in the old settlement in the 1730's. Prior to his coming, they were inhabited by almost a hundred white people who had moved farther into the interior of what was then Edgecombe Precinct. Battle brought with him ten Negroes to cultivate the fields and no whites except his wife.

In the early 1740's, a number of men who were to become prominent in the colony bought lands along the Morattock River in what was then Edgecombe Precinct, later Halifax County, and presently part of Martin County. It was about this time, in 1742, that William Biggs was granted a tract of thousands of acres, starting about where Roberson's "Sunnyside" Oyster Bar is now located in Williamston and running south to the present Old Mill Inn site on Highway 17. On the east the tract was bounded by Sweet Water Creek and it extended south and went to a point about half way to Bear Grass.

The Colonial General Assembly, meeting at New Bern, in December, 1755, established inspection points in Tyrrell (now Martin) County for hemp, flax, flaxseed, pork, beef, rice, flour, indigo, butter, tar, pitch, turpentine, staves, headings, lumber, shingles, and deerskin at the following locations along the Roanoke River: Hog Town, Gardner's (Creek), Daley's (Hill), and Welch's Creek. Prior to that, warehouses for the inspection of "tobacco, turpentine, shingles, hemp, flax, pork, beef, flour, indigo, tar, pitch, etc.," had been established at William Williams' on Kehukee Creek in what is now upper Martin County. About 1752 it was reported that tobacco was moved from this section to Norfolk, where it was inspected again. The best was selected for export and the remainder burned at that time.

Cattle produced in this section for market were handled in a somewhat similar manner. The cattle were herded or shipped by boat to Virginia, where they were slaughtered, the producer being paid only for the net beef, while the hide, tallow, liver, and other remnants were retained by the dealers. Swine also was slaughtered in Virginia, exported and sold abroad as Virginia pork.

One phase of the agriculture and trade in this region during the 1700's is described in the book about his father, The Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross, written by James Ross and printed in 1882 at Upland, Pa. The passage, concerning events of more than 200 years ago, is as follows: "Reuben Ross' father, William Ross, Jr., was successful in accumulating property. The vast canebrakes on the rich alluvial lands along the Roanoke River afforded abundant food for cattle, summer and winter, and the mast that fell from the forest trees enabled him to raise hogs to good profit, but little corn was needed, and that only to keep them gentle. These products were sold chiefly to traders from New England, who ascended the Roanoke in their vessels. This enabled him and others, who were industrious and enterprising, to realize large profits for those times. All this prosperity, however vanished at the commencement of the Revolutionary War. British cruisers filled the waters. Trade of all kinds was paralyzed, and at the close of that eventful period, he found himself a poor man, comparatively, with a large family to provide for...."

Very little appears in the early records concerning the principal crops of that period. It is known that some tobacco was produced in the very early days of the colony, but no mention of it is to be found from the time Martin County was formed in 1774 until more than a hundred years later, when it started a comeback that has made it the principal cash crop today. Very little was heard about cotton in the earliest days, but it developed into the main crop not only in this section but in the entire South in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. With the advent of the boll weevil, cotton declined in importance in Martin County, and today relatively few acres are devoted to it, practically all located in the upper part of the county.

From the very beginning of agriculture in Martin County, corn has commanded the greatest acreage, and that continues true today. That crop was, and still is, one of the principal sources of food and feed for both man and beast. The soil of the county is well adapted to its production, and the yield has grown from an average of less than 10 bushels per acre in the beginning to more than 100 bushels today, when the hybrid varieties are largely used. County soils are also especially well adapted to peanuts and soybeans, two crops which have been developed in more recent years but were unknown in the early days for their commercial possibilities.

During the first 100 years or so of the area's history, settlers along the south bank of the Roanoke River were primarily concerned with remaining alive, keeping a wary eye on the Indians while, a little later, being engaged in a desperate struggle for their independence from English domination. Using the crude implements then available and hand labor, they managed to scratch a living from the soil, but they had had very little left over for selling except for the forest products, including tar, pitch, turpentine, shingles, staves, and headings for barrels and hogsheads, which must be included as part of the agricultural picture in the earliest days.

It was along about the middle of the nineteenth century that agriculture began coming into its own. Editor Abner S. Williams, writing in the Williamston Mercury on April 20, 1859, had the following to say about what was taking place: "It is gratifying to witness the changes now going on in Martin County. The people are becoming more fully awakened to their true interests, and instead of devoting a majority of their time to the manufacture of tar and shingles, they have begun to turn their attention to the cultivation of the soil."

The editor went on to say that in increasing the cotton crop, he saw greater prosperity for the county. He stated that he was impressed by the progressive programs the farmers were advancing at that time, centered around ditching, hedgerow shrubbing, and land improvement which were general throughout the county in 1859. He also said that an agricultural society had been organized, but did not give the names of the members or any details of their program.

In the same article the editor wrote that tar and shingles were the principal sources of cash income for farmers of the county. Much of the tar was exported at that time to the West Indies in exchange for blackstrap molasses and rum. The editor noted that Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington on the Potomac River, had been reshingled with products from the Astoria Mill near Jamesville.

It was shortly after the middle of the nineteenth century that commercial fertilizer was first mentioned. "New York Night Soil" was advertised in both The Mercury and The Democratic Banner, two newspapers published in Williamston during the 1850's. Its use as a fertilizer was limited, due to scarcity of money. The same was true of Peruvian Guano, used by some county farmers to increase their crop yields about that time. However, later in the century commercial fertilizer started gaining the strong foothold it has in the present-day agriculture of Martin County.

The development of agriculture in this county was given a tremendous boost during its formative years by invention of the turning and cotton plows. Around 1835 an agricultural implement plant was established in Tarboro to make plows and castings and take care of major repairs. Martin County farmers patronized the plant liberally. About this time a number of improved implements and items of machinery began to come into the markets that eventually were to revolutionize farming, and Martin County farmers themselves had a hand in the development and improvement of some of the equipment. Possibly one of the most important inventions was the so-called "straddle-row plow," developed by the late Joseph L. Woolard and his brother, James Asa Woolard. Named the "Woolard Harrow," the first ones were made in the latter part of the nineteenth century by the two brothers at a workshop on their farm in Bear Grass Township, located about seven miles south of Williamston.

When not engaged in farm work, the two brothers manufactured the harrows or cultivators for a number of years before moving the shop to Williamston; and in January, 1906, they were operating in a building later occupied by Lindsley Equipment Company, just off Washington Street. Some years afterwards the business was acquired by S. R. Biggs Iron & Motor company, that firm continuing to make some of the harrows and plows for a time. The original patents having expired, other manufacturers then developed the Woolard idea into more modern and efficient implements and equipment.

Before the Woolard Harrow, cultivation of crops required two trips to each row, up one side and down the other. The new implement made it possible to cultivate both sides of the row at one time, cutting the labor and time required by half. This walking cultivator was later developed into the riding cultivator, which, in turn, was succeeded by today's more sophisticated multi-row gang cultivators, pulled by tractors.

In his diaries, Elder C. B. Hassell made several references to the use of improved equipment on farms of the county. One of the earliest entries was the following, under the date of October 16, 1848: "H. Williams had a pump put into his well to use instead of a sweep and pole." This undoubtedly refers to the first installation of a water pump in the county.

There are a number of entries in Elder Hassell's diaries about a lot of grain threshing machines which he received in the spring of 1854. He was agent in this section for the machines, which were a new development, and he arranged for demonstrations that were well attended, according to his notes. He also referred several times to "a horse power," very likely a system of gears and pulleys operated by a horse or mule walking in circles to provide power for operation of the threshing machine and other equipment.

Elder Hassell's notes concerning the threshers are substantially as follows: May 29, 1854: "Brethren Thomas and Joseph D. Biggs down examining grain threshers, a lot of which (I) had received for sale, but could not tell in what way they operated." The following day he wrote: "May 30, 1854: Mr. Coggeshall from New York, owner of the threshing machines arrived and engaged (my) attention most of the day in explanation concerning them."

Evidently the explanation was not sufficient, or more definite instructions were required, as Elder Hassell wrote on June 12, 1854: "Mr. Wm. R. Palmer, author (inventor) of the celebrated grain thresher, was in town, and (I) sent out a thresher and horse power to Bro. Saml. Rogers' for the purpose of making a trial of one on the morrow." The demonstration was a success, as the elder wrote the following day, June 13, 1854: ". . . also went out to Bro. Saml. Rogers' to see operation of Palmer's Wheat Thresher. It operated nicely. Many were present to witness it." He had another entry the same day: "Also put up a horse power in the yard as a sample for the farmers to look—designed to carry (operate) wheat threshers, etc."

A news item appearing in a Scotland Neck newspaper in 1890 reports that one of the first mechanical mowing machines to be used in Martin County was operated by W. A. Fleming near Hassell. He was said to be doing custom mowing for a number of farmers in that section in the fall of that year. In another item in that paper, it was reported that more cotton was being moved to the Hamilton market in the fall of 1890 than in any year since the Civil War.

One of the early moves toward mechanization of farm equipment in the Conoho (Oak City) area took place in October, 1901, when W. K. Hurst purchased a small boiler and steam engine to run a threshing machine. So far as is known, it was the first in the county.

Although the people of the county generally considered they were making tremendous steps in the advancement of agriculture from the middle 1800's on, such progress was regarded as relative by others. In the book, North Carolina and Its Resources, published in 1896, the State Department of Agriculture, describing the counties, wrote the following about Martin County: "Because of its large and profitable lumber industry in the great cypress swamps of the Roanoke and its turpentine forests and fishing interests, its agriculture is less advanced. Its waters abound in fish and its forests in game. The fisheries on the Roanoke are extensive and valuable." The report also says: "Cotton, peanuts, corn, tobacco, oats, and every kind of grain grow well on its soil. Its lighter sandy soils are fine for trucking, while on its stiffer lands clover and grapes grow finely. Grapes and all kinds of fruits may be raised with little effort. Marl is abundant and is used to a moderate extent."

PEANUTS

Both agriculture and mechanization of farming became more important in the county during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Peanuts were introduced as a money crop on a limited scale shortly after the Civil War, and the production of tobacco was resumed on a steadily increasing scale following a lapse of a century. Later, soybeans moved in as one of the principal crops as the boll weevil brought the downfall of cotton, which had been the mainstay of the agricultural economy for 100 years or more.

Elder C. B. Hassell's grandson, C. B. Hassell, who was connected with the peanut business in Williamston for 25 or 30 years during the early part of this century, said in an article written for The Enterprise in 1944 that the first peanuts were produced in this county by John D. Simpson in 1865. They were grown on Simpson's farm between Williamston and Everetts and were brought here and sold to John D. Biggs, who was engaged in the mercantile business about that time.

A few years later, William Slade was engaged in buying peanuts from farmers in the county, and the crop began qradually to expand. A few more farmers began planting some acreage to peanuts, and a few more merchants began buying them. The peanuts were shipped to commission firms in Norfolk which, in turn, sold them to the mills. Picking the peanuts from the vines by hand was a slow process, however, and during the early days of the crop in the county anyone who produced 100 bags was considered a big planter.

The first attempt to persuade Martin County farmers to begin producing peanuts on a large scale was made by R. W. Everett, a member of the Hamilton mercantile firm of Martin and Everett, in 1884. Writing to the Williamston Enterprise on September 20, 1930, from Brunswick, Ga., where he was then living, he described his venture with peanuts in detail, stating that it was not the losses he sustained with this crop but the low price of cotton that had forced him out of business in Martin County.

Cotton prices were so low in 1884, he wrote, that farmers were unable to pay their debts. He bought 1,000 bushels of seed peanuts and rode all over Martin County in a horse and buggy, literally begging farmers to switch from cotton to peanuts. He said he had visited C. W. Grandy and Sons, a reputable Norfolk firm which had a small farm in Virginia, and gained some valuable information about the crop. He learned about the value of using lime on peanuts and went to mills at Canton and Baltimore, bought 1,000 tons of lime—later known in this section as land-plaster—and had it shipped up the Roanoke River in a large boat to Hamilton.

To prove his good faith in urging others to go into peanut production, he planted 100 acres on a farm near Hamilton. The county was then in the peanut business in a substantial way, but he faced another big problem: developing a local market for the crop. He had promised the growers Norfolk market prices, less freight. In his letter, Everett stated that he bought and stored 25,000 bushels of peanuts in every available nook and corner in Hamilton. He held the peanuts until the spring of 1885, finally selling them in small lots all over the country, sustaining a loss of some $10,000. He explained that two Virginia counties, along with Martin in this state, could produce more peanuts then than the whole world could eat. Peanuts were not crushed for oil in those days, no peanut butter was manufactured, and the demand was limited principally to that created by those who parched and sold peanuts at street corners.

Mr. Everett said the peanut picker was then in its experimental stage, and when he first became interested in it he went to Williamsburg, Va., to confer with a Mr. Creasy, who was trying to develop a mechanical picker. Creasy explained that he had gone broke on his work on the picker and that he was then unable "to buy even a bolt." Everett took Creasy to Richmond, where a large machinery manufacturer undertook to make the machine at Everett's expense. Little is known about the success or failure of the picker referred to in his letter. When he left the county, Everett sold the machine to Octavius Cooke, then lieutenant governor of North Carolina. Apparently it was not too successful, and it was not until later that an efficient mechanical picker was introduced into this section by a manufacturer in Suffolk, Va.

Few, if any, official records are available, but the Everett venture was temporary, and the next mention of peanut production in the county was in the 1890's, when John D. Simpson, the pioneer, again planted a few acres on his farm near Everetts in Cross Roads Township. For well over a decade, the peanuts grown were separated from the vines by hand, necessarily limiting the crop. A little later some farmers tried picking peanuts by dragging the vines across screens made of poultry wire, according to J. S. Mallory, a recognized authority on Martin County agriculture.

Talking to W. C. Manning, editor of the Williamston Enterprise, in 1928, Mr. Simpson told about an early experience with the new crop. He said he ordered the seed from Tennessee and planted four acres of the red variety, which yielded three and four kernels to each pod. His first commercial planting returned a good yield of almost a hundred bushels per acre. They were hauled to Williamston and shipped by boat to Norfolk, where they were sold for two cents a pound.

The Virginia runner varieties of peanuts were introduced into the county later and became the most popular type for soils in the area. Although the peanut is in the legume family, members of which are generally considered soil builders, the peanut may impoverish the land, since every part of it is dug, roots and all, leaving little or no humus. The pods and kernels are sold to peanut millers, while the stalk and leaves are baled and used as hay in most instances.

Known first in Brazil, the peanut moved to Europe next and was said to be one of the items of food served to slaves on their trips from Africa to America. It was introduced into this country soon after colonization began, but its spread in the south began only after the Civil War. Between 1890 and 1900 the peanut made great progress in North Carolina. Acreage increased about 440 per cent and production jumped by 722 per cent during the period. By 1899 the State was producing about one-third of all the peanuts in the entire nation.

However, the peanut did not begin to come into its own until after development of the mechanical picker. R. H. Weaver of Gold Point is believed to have owned and operated one of the first pickers in the county in October, 1908. It was several years later, probably around 1912, that its use became general, bringing about a revolution in the county's agriculture. Peanuts soon became second in importance only to tobacco, and they have held that place to this day.

Dr. John D. Biggs had an advertisement in the Williamston newspaper on September 22, 1905, offering for sale "one Creasy Peanut Picker and one 40-saw cotton gin." Nothing much is known about the Creasy picker, but it evidently was not too successful, as there is no further mention of that brand in any of the early records. The Benthall Machine Company of Suffolk, Va., was advertising its picker in the Williamston Enterprise as early as August, 1906, but it was some years later before use of that brand became general in the county. It was the most popular make in the section for a number of years.

That the peanut was gaining momentum in the field of agriculture in Martin County is shown by a newspaper report in February, 1904, of J. G. Staton's purchase of 1,000 bags the Saturday before; and his agent, W. R. White, had bought 1,300 bags in Washington County in two days. Other buyers on the Washington County in two days. Other buyers on the Williamston market at that time included Anderson-Crawford & Company, J. L. Hassell & Company, J. D. Simpson, and N. S. Peel.

It was a little later than this that the first complaint about prices was heard. An appeal was made through the newspaper on November, 1907, for peanut growers to hold out for a 4-cent price for prime peanuts and $1 per bushel for the Spanish type. The crop was said to be only three-fourths of normal size, with quality good. It was estimated that it cost the farmer 3½ cents per pound to produce the peanuts for market at that time.

Around 1910 to 1912, a number of merchants in the farm supply business in the county began buying peanuts from the farmers. About this time, too, peanut shellers and cleaners started sending buyers to producing centers to make purchases direct from the larger growers and the merchants. Some of the mills established agents in the producing territory to buy on a commission basis at 5 cents a bag. In this county, many of these peanuts were hauled to the wharf at Williamston and shipped by boat or loaded into cars at the several railroad stations and shipped by rail to firms in Suffolk, Smithfield, Wakefield, and Norfolk, all in Virginia, where most of the mills were located.

There were buyers in practically all the towns of the county. In Robersonville there were the Barnhills, the Robersons, and the Smiths; in Hamilton, the Salsburys, the Slades, the Joneses, and others; in Jamesville, U. S. Hassell, W. W. Walters, and others; and in Everetts, Jim Peel was an active buyer on a large scale. In Williamston at that time J. G. Staton represented the Bain interests; Anderson-Crawford bought for American Peanut Corp.; J. L. Hassell and Company for the Columbia Peanut Company; and Eli Gurganus for a new concern by the name of Planters Nut and Chocolate Company, which has grown and expanded until it is now probably the largest user of peanuts in the United States.

The first peanut cleaning and shelling plant in the county was built in 1907 in Williamston by the Virginia-Carolina Peanut Company, incorporators of which were listed as Eli Gurganus, J. G. Staton, W. T. Meadows, J. R. Mobley, J. G. Godard, and Herbert H. Cowen. Located on the railroad track near the present location of the W. I. Skinner redrying plant, it continued in operation until destroyed by fire in 1912. In 1908, the plant had about 40 employees and peanuts were selling for 66 cents per bushel.

In 1913, a public meeting was held in Williamston to discuss rebuilding of the plant. However, nothing came of it until May, 1915, when another plant was started by Leslie T. Fowden, Dr. J. S. Saunders, and H. H. Cowen. A four-story building on Reese Street was constructed, and about the time it was finished, J. L. Hassell and Company bought a half interest in it. The firm was named the Roanoke Peanut Company and it began business with what appeared a bright and promising future, but its plant was destroyed by fire during the first year of operation.

Work was started on a new and modern cleaning and shelling plant in April, 1930, by Columbian Peanut Company, one of the major peanut milling firms then in the field. Some additions were made to the plant in 1934, and it continued operations under the original name for ten years, being sold in August, 1940, to four Williamston men: G. H. Harrison, N. C. Green, Jesse W. Whitley, and W. C. Windley. It was renamed Williamston Peanut Company and continues operations at the present time under that name. Mr. Green later acquired the interests of the others and became sole owner.

Still another plant was built in Williamston in the present century, that of the Dixie Peanut Company, by a partnership composed of John A. Manning, Johnnie Gurkin, W. C. Windley, W. R. Edmondson, and Carlyle Langley. It was a four-story structure, located on the Plymouth branch of the ACL Railroad, near the Washington Street crossing. Work was started on it in June, 1945, and it was completed in time for the crop that year. Mr. Windley continued operations until recent years, when his health failed.

At one time Williamston was said to be the largest "wagon market" for peanuts in the world. "Wagon market" meant that the producers themselves delivered their peanuts to the buyers or milling plants. By 1917 farmers in the county were growing the jumbo and Virginia varieties of peanuts principally. With the development of improved varieties at state test farms, better fertilizers, and better methods of cultivating and handling taught by county agents and federal and state departments of agriculture specialists, increased yields per acre were reported almost every year.

In 1924, peanuts were planted on 17,589 acres of Martin County land and produced 687,958 bushels, or an average of about 40 bushels per acre. The average weight of a bushel is about 22 pounds. Principal varieties were Virginia Bunch, Virginia Runner, and Jumbo Spanish. The peanuts were bought by local buyers and shipped out of the state for the most part, mainly to Suffolk and Norfolk. At harvest time, about a fourth of the peanuts were left in the ground, and hogs were turned into the fields to eat what remained after picking. Some fields were planted to peanuts for the sole purpose of fattening hogs. When peanuts were dug, some of the dirt was shaken out of the vines, which were then stacked on small poles until dry, then usually in late fall or winter the peanuts were picked off by machinery. The peanut hay, good food for cattle, was baled at the same time. The leaves, dirt and vines which accumulated around the pickers were spread over the field for soil improvement. It was common practice then to follow corn and soybeans with cotton, peanuts, or tobacco.

By 1919 peanuts had reached the status of a million-dollar crop in Martin, making three crops valued at a million or more dollars in the county, the other two being tobacco and cotton. Prices dropped sharply in the post-war deflationary period of 1920, when the farmers had raised an expensive crop and were getting less than the cost of production in return. This brought about a flurry of activity to develop a cooperative marketing organization by the farmers themselves, to be patterned after the very successful California growers' exchanges.

Martin County peanut growers met in Williamston on May 22, 1920, and in Robersonville the following day to hear talks on organizing by W. J. DeCorse, eastern representative of the California Associated Raisin Company, and J. Frank Foushee, secretary and manager of the Virginia-Carolina Cooperative Peanut Exchange, of Suffolk. Some enthusiasm developed and preliminary steps were taken to organize the growers.

Considerable stir was created in March of the following year, when Foushee, manager of the "peanut co-op," was arrested in Plymouth on orders of the state insurance commissioner, presumably as the result of complaints of some Martin County farmers. The Williamston newspaper said it was believed the arrest was "instigated" by the "Peanut Trust" and that the farmers' interest were set back by the action. No immediate hearing was held, the state commissioner saying he wanted the charges fully investigated.

Foushee's arrest spurred interest in the cooperative, and Martin County peanut growers formed a county organization at a meeting on April 14, 1921, at which Foushee, Dr. Clarence Poe, editor of The Progressive Farmer, of Raleigh, and O. F. McCrary were speakers. W. C. Manning, Sr., was named president of the county organization and T. B. Slade, secretary. Vice presidents were H. R. Knowles, L. D. Harrison, Louis H. Peel, H. U. Peel, Jesse A. Leggett, H. C. Norman, Harry Waldo, and J. R. Everett.

On June 7, 1921, it was announced that Martin County was only 60 growers and 15,000 bags of peanuts short of its organizational goal, while in the belt as a whole the sign-up was only 500 short of its goal of 5,000 farmers. At the same time it was announced that the "Trust" had increased its prices to farmers by one cent a pound. On June 17, the drive "went over the top," with over 5,000 agreeing to sell their peanuts cooperatively. The growers received a charter for the "Peanut Growers Exchange" in early August, and a few days later the county group met in Williamston to select delegates for election of officers in Suffolk on August 17, 1921. However, at marketing time that year, peanut prices opened slightly higher, sounding the death knell of the cooperative movement. The exchange continued to operate for a few years, but its support gradually faded until it went out of business. The same fate occurred to cooperative marketing movements for several other crops in the early twenties.

It remained for the depression of the early thirties to hit peanut farmers of the county their hardest blow. Stunned by peanuts selling at one cent a pound, cheap tobacco and cotton, Martin farmers, under the leaderhship of Don G. Matthews, Sr., of Hamilton, on Febrgary 22, 1930, started another movement to organize in an attempt to get better prices for their 1929 crop. Little progress was made at that time and prices for farm commodities continued to slip.

More than 100 farmers met in the courthouse at Williamston on December 8, 1932, to make plans for orderly marketing of the peanut crop in the hope that such action might have a beneficial effect on prices. Peanuts had been selling that fall around 90 cents per 100 pounds, with a few lots going as low as 75 cents. It was proposed that marketing be limited by each farmer to 10 per cent of his crop each month and that a reduction be made in the acreage planted to peanuts in 1933. About the middle of December, 1932, it was estimated that fewer than 2,000 bags of peanuts had been shipped from the county to cleaners. The Williamston Enterprise began accepting peanuts in exchange for subscriptions, and several hundred bags were delivered to the newspaper in about two months.

With peanuts selling for one cent a pound or less in January, 1933, many Martin County producers began storing them in their barns and packhouses or in a bonded warehouse in Williamston operated by E. P. Cunningham, W. I. Skinner, Jr., and W. H. Carstarphen. Others left their peanuts unpicked in the fields. John W. Eubanks, of Hassell, large-scale farmer and member of the Martin County Board of Education, said at the time that approximately 50,000 bags of peanuts were stored in the Hassell area, producers waiting and hoping for an increase in price.

Following the change of administration in the early part of 1933, the Federal Farm Administration in December of that year acted to stabilize the price of peanuts at three cents a pound, boosting the income of North Carolina producers of the crop by an estimated two million dollars over that of the preceding year. This marked the start of a slow climb back to prosperous levels. Peanuts farmers in Martin County and throughout the belt were elated.

Growth of the peanut crop in this county is reflected in oficial figures from state and federal marketing services. No acreage at all was reported for the county prior to 1889, when 841 acres were planted and 26,801 bushels were harvested. Yield statistics through 1924 were reported in bushels instead of pounds; here these figures are multiplied by 22—estimated weight in pounds of a bushel—to provide a more stable basis for comparison. With this conversion the average yield in 1889 was about 700 pounds per acre. Ten years later, the acreage had increased nearly tenfold, being 7,821, and the yield was 7,698,790 pounds, or about 945 pounds per acre.

The crop continued its growth in the next 25 years, 17,589 acres being planted in 1924. That was not a particularly good crop year, since only 15,135,076 pounds were harvested, averaging about 860 pounds per acre, as compared with the 945 average of 1899. Maximum acreage of peanuts was reached in 1945 when 27,500 acres, averaging 980 pounds, were harvested.

It has been in relatively recent years that the peanut has made its greatest advance as a money crop in Martin County. In 1953 the average yield per acre was 833 pounds. In the next 20 years, the average more than quadrupled, reaching its maximum at 2,980 pounds per acre for the whole county in 1973. The crop that year was also the most valuable, being worth $7,750,980 to farmers of the county. Since the latest control programs have been in effect, the acreage has been reduced considerably, leveling off at around 14,000 to 15,000 acres per year, but with a steadily increasing value.

That Martin has been a leader in average production per acre in recent years is demonstrated by the number of its producers who qualified for membership in the exclusive clubs sponsored by the North Carolina Peanut Growers Association and extension service specialists for growers meeting or exceeding specified high standards of production. The Two-Ton Club was organized in 1956, composed of growers who made a yield of 4,000 or more pounds per acre under supervised conditions. It was decided to raise the objectives in 1970, for so many growers were exceeding requirements that the Two-Ton Club was becoming unwieldy, so that a 5,000-Pound Club was formed. According to the office of the county extension service, Martin has had more members in the clubs than any other county in the peanut-producing area. Officials have also mentioned talk of raising the standard again, this time to 6,000 pounds, and making it the Three-Ton Club.

W. Jesse Griffin of Griffins Township was the first Martin County peanut grower to win the Two-Ton Club's first award, producing 4,144 pounds per acre under contest conditions in 1961. The following year he became the first grower ever to produce over 5,000 pounds per acre, his average being 5,086 pounds; this was eight years before the 5,000-Pound Club was organized. W. C. Britton of Bear Grass Township, a member of the Two-Ton Club for a number of years, was first in the county to be designated an official member of the 5,000-Pound Club when in 1970 he produced 5,234 pounds per acre, and he repeated as a member in 1973.

There is an incidental footnote that may be of interest in connection with the history of the peanut in Martin County. During the latter part of World War II, and immediately after its close, German prisoners of war from a camp in Williamston were used extensively in harvesting the peanut crops in both Martin and Bertie Counties. The prisoners were "farmed out" by contract as labor for farming, lumbering, and industrial operations.

An article in the Williamston Enterprise on September 11, 1945, reported that on the preceding day hundreds of farmers, some of them arriving as early as six in the morning, had applied for prisoner of war labor contracts to Mrs. Josephine Holding, who was handling the matter for the Army's Fourth Service Command at the office of the county agent. Contracts were completed by early afternoon for 200 of the prisoners to start harvesting peanuts the following Monday. It was stated that 2,100 acres of peanuts were harvested in 1944 by the prisoners.

The Army's rules concerning employment of the prisoners for harvesting peanuts were very specific and strictly enforced. They provided: "The stack pole will be 8 feet long, set 18 inches in the ground, with crosspieces not more than 40 inches long, nailed 12 inches above the ground, making a 5½-foot stack of peanuts. The above stack poles will not be set more than 12 rows apart. The maximum distance between stack poles in the row will be 14 steps (3 feet per step). The actual distances are dependent on growth of vine and yield of peanuts. Production of 25 stacks, shaking and stacking by hand, will constitute a normal day's work after prisoners of war have been given two days training by the farmer or the Agricultural Extension Service."

The contract called for a payment of 12 cents per stack for the work after the training period, and $1.50 per day if the farmers failed to provide work during the contract period. The maximum work day, including travel time, was 14 hours, but prisoners were to be returned earlier if they completed their task. The contract also stated, "The duty of the guards is to prevent escape and it is not their duty to make the prisoners work," the latter being the contractor's responsibility, with reports to be made to the camp commander for any disciplinary action.

COTTON

Despite the fact that cotton was the mainstay of commercial farming for the first century and a quarter of Martin County's existence, there is less to be learned about it in early records than about almost any other aspect of the section's development. There can be little doubt that it was being produced here even before the county was established in 1774, but it was not until 1793, when Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, that it really began to come into its own.

Prior to the invention of the gin, it was necessary to separate the fiber from the seed laboriously by hand, and little cotton was planted except on the larger plantations where there were plenty of slaves to do practically all of the work. Whitney's invention made it possible for the crop to be grown on smaller family farms, though to a limited extent as there was still plenty of hand work in planting, cultivation, and picking.

Most of the early gins were located on the big farms, and this served to spur expansion of plantations through more land clearing, which in turn increased the demand for slaves. Around the turn of the 19th century the Hill, Williams, and Slade families, along with others, were the principal growers of cotton on their large farms in the upper part of the county, but the crop was beginning to spread out. Custom gins were installed in various parts of the county a little later, when cotton production increased as facilities expanded. Before the advent of railroads, much of the staple was moved to marketing centers by boats from Hamilton and Williamston, where the principal buyers were located.

First official mention of a public cotton gin is contained in a deed from Joseph Waldo to Bryant Bennett, dated August 1845, for a "cotton gin, screw, cotton house, and shelters," along with a half acre of land, located on the Hamilton-Tarboro road. The price was $300. Location of the gin is not certain, but it may have been on the present Hassell road, or State Highway 42, leading off State Highway 125, near Butler's Bridge and not far from Hamilton. In later years, the Coffields operated a water mill just off Highway 125 on the Hassell road, and it could have been that the mill or cotton gin; operated by water power, was located at about the same place. The deed was witnessed by Benjamin Martin and Joseph G. Carroway. W. W. Watts was register of deeds at that time. It is probable that this gin was in operation prior to the time of sale, since the deed called for its equipment along with the land, "cotton house, and shelters."

Following the Civil War, the number of cotton gins increased steadily, as the staple became the chief source of income in the county, along with shingles, staves, and other lumber products. This situation continued right on into the twentieth century. There were 21 gins in the county in 1906. The trend toward ever larger acreages brought a plea early in this century from the Southern Cotton Association for Martin County farmers to reduce their cotton crop by at least 10 per cent and divert the land to food crops. They were warned that if they did not cut their cotton plantings, the price would very probably drop back to the six-cent level which prevailed in 1904.

The plea fell on deaf ears and the price held up fairly well until about 1914, when a record crop of right at 16 million bales saw the bottom drop out of the market. Then the price did fall back to about six cents a pound, in comparison to the twelve cents received for the short crop of 1913, when the average yield was only 182 pounds per acre. Cotton made a comeback after the start of World War I in Europe and continued to bring a fair return through 1919, following the end of the war in 1918. By that time it had become almost a million-dollar crop in Martin County, but the "bust" of 1920, coupled with problems created by the boll weevil, sounded the death knell of cotton as a major crop, so far as farmers in this immediate section were concerned.

As far back as 1879, this county planted 13,444 acres to cotton and produced 6,383 bales. Ten years later, in 1889, the acreage had grown to 20,275, but it must have been a very poor crop, as only 5,048 bales were reported as the yield. The acreage fluctuated after that, going down to as low as 8,614 in 1899 and up to 18,692 in 1924. The yield, total and per acre, likewise varied greatly, from the 1899 low of about a quarter bale per acre to the 8,184 bales from 11,330 acres in 1919, almost three-quarters of a bale per acre.

The first mention of the boll weevil being found in Martin County was in a news article appearing in the Williamston Enterprise on September 5, 1913. J. Arthur Wynn discovered the pest on his farm in late August, describing it as a type of worm, first of a light brown color, then brown and black streaked, and, lastly, green.

Eggs were found in the blooms. Farmer Wynn commented at the time, "I have heard of this insect long before, and am sorry that it reached here. This is bad news for this county, as cotton is the standard money crop." The newspaper noted at the time that "the new pest will have to be contended with until, perhaps, the planting of cotton is abandoned altogether."

The boll weevil, however, did not make its appearance in sizable numbers in the county until around 1922, when a short crop was produced. In early January of the following year, 1923, county farmers met to discuss poisoning the weevil, and many did try a poison dust and molasses mixture for a few years. Finally, however, most of them gave up and King Cotton abdicated his throne in Martin County in favor of "The Golden Weed." J.C. Taylor, a boll weevil specialist employed by a fertilizer firm, came to the county in December, 1923, to plan meetings to help farmers combat the weevil, but he managed to create little interest in the project.

When the first cotton control program was inaugurated in August, 1933, 500 Martin county farmers plowed under some 2,764 acres of cotton, for which they received payments totaling $35,790 from the federal government, or an average of slightly more than $12.90 for each acre taken out of production that year. In 1936, T.B. Slade of Hamilton headed a project to work out a four-year cotton control measure at a time when the outlook for agriculture was said to be getting a little brigher.

In recent years, the bottom for the cotton crop was possibly 1967, when the marketing services reported only about 600 acres were harvested, the average yield per acre being 165 pounds of lint, for a total of 210 bales with an aggregate value of $29,800. The following year, 1968, figures were up again, about 2,000 acres being harvested, yielding 350 pounds per acre and a total of 1,480 bales, with the value set at $167,000 in official reports.

Extension officials in the county now see cotton as on the way back again. In 1973, some 2,200 acres were harvested in the upper part of the county, the yield being estimated at more than a bale to the acre, with a total value, including support payments, of upwards of $836,500. One large-scale operator indicated he would plant 600 acres to the crop in 1974.

Practically all of the cotton now being produced in Martin County is in the northern and western parts of the county, about where the crop got its first start with the early colonists. Marketing quotas have been in effect for all the years since 1954, and cotton growers vote annually on continuance of the program. Allotments are based on the past history of the individual farms, and the programs have been approved by one-sided votes in every election.

TOBACCO

The history of tobacco production in Martin County, for the most part, goes back hardly a hundred years, although the plant itself is indigenous to the section and the Indians were growing it here more than 400 years ago, even before the white man arrived. The first settlers raised some tobacco, partly for their own use, but mostly for trading, since tobacco was a medium of exchange in the early days. All of the tobacco sold then was exported to England, and when the Revolutionary War put an end to this trade, tobacco production in this section just about ceased until a century ago.

Much of the tobacco grown in Martin County now is the cigarette type, and cigarettes have become a highly controversial subject in recent years. Public health officials published findings in the 1960's linking the use of cigarettes with serious health problems. Such findings have been disputed by the tobacco industry, which cites results of laboratory tests and opinions of distinguished physicians refuting the charges. Cigarette consumption has continued to increase in spite of a federal law requiring a warning on each package that cigarettes may be detrimental to the health of the user; and tobacco production is still in first place in the agricultural economy of Martin County.

There is not even any agreement on the origin of the word "tobacco." According to a newspaper article published early in this century, some say the word comes from "Tobasco," a Province in Mexico, while others say it can be traced to "toboca," a Topi Indian word for the tube through which the smoke was inhaled. Indians used tobacco as a cure for certain diseases, for healing of wounds, for defense against insects and like pests, and to prevent hunger, thirst, or fatigue. They considered the plant the most precious gift to man and used it not only as a medium of exchange but as a principal factor in many of their religious, civil, and social ceremonies. The first record of the comeback of tobacco in this county, after commercial production had ceased about the time of the Revolution, is contained in the census report for 1880, which listed one acre planted in 1879, yielding

211 pounds, though its value was not reported. No tobacco was reported for 1889 in the 1890 census, but in 1899 there were 1,968 acres, yielding 1,353,040 pounds, or just about 800 pounds per acre. Ten years later, in 1909, the acreage had increaed to 3,183, but the average yield had dropped sharply, to about 570 pounds, and the total yield was only 1,813,278 pounds. Acreage went up again in the next ten years, reaching 8,089; the average yield per acre also went up, to 663 pounds, and the total poundage raised was 5,369,303.

The next ten years saw a tremendous increase in tobacco acreage—from 8,089 acres in 1919 to 18,136 acres in 1929; but the yield fluctuated considerably, dropping from 665 pounds per acre in 1919 to 575 pounds in 1929. The year 1929 was not a good one for the crop, the yield per acre being substantially higher in both the preceding and following years—720 pounds in 1928 and 760 pounds in 1930. This was in the period when prices were declining steadily for practically all farm crops, and the 1929 crop of 10½ million pounds was worth over $100,000 more than the 1930 crop of nearly 14 million pounds.

According to extension and marketing service reports for the period 1866 through 1973, the 18,284 acres planted to tobacco in 1930 was the largest acreage on record; the highest average yield was 2,400 pounds in 1973; and the largest crop was in 1961, when 19,412,580 pounds were produced and the entire crop was valued at $10,544,820. The crop worth most was that of 1973, when the production of 16,920,000 pounds averaged right at 89 cents per pound for a total value of $14,814,653. On the other end of the scale, the 1879 crop of a single acre, producing 211 pounds, must be the smallest on record in all categories.

In all the history of agriculture, tobacco has unquestionably been one of the most difficult and expensive crops to produce. Its resisted mechanization right up to recent years; and while some degree of automation has now been achieved, in the past it called for perhaps the longest hours of the hardest, most disagreeable, back-breaking, dirty physical labor of anything ever planted on Martin County farms.

In the past new ground was required for plant beds, to lessen the chance of developing diseases retained in the soil from previous crops, and that meant clearing new land for the plant beds early in the crop year. This was followed by cleaning and sowing the seed, arranging the cover, removing it for weeding by hand, and finally transplanting, itself a dirty disagreeable job until transplanters were invented. Then came the cultivation, weeding, removing the worms and suckers by hand, topping, breaking, hanging the sticks in the barns; and next three 24-hour days of continuous curing in barns with wood-burning and later oil-burning furnaces. The leaf then had to be removed from the barns, packed away, tied into "hands," and graded before it was deemed ready for the market. At one time in this section, each individual leaf was ironed by hand before it was taken to the market, and until relatively recently the local markets remained open even after Christmas, which meant one crop was still being marketed after work ahd been started on the succeeding one.

The work has been somewhat simplified in recent years but tobacco continues to be an expensive crop, everything considered. The mechanical equipment required is quite costly, some of it to the extent that groups of producers go in together, buy the machinery cooperatively, and work out schedules among themselves for its use. First to be developed probably was the transplanter, followed by various pieces of spraying equipment, for use in eradication of pests and to help control plant diseases. One of the first successful tobacco harvesting machines was develoepd by Jim Brown Holliday and his brother, Leonard, in 1953, at their farm in Jamesville Township. A driver, four primers, and four loopers were required to operate it, and it could harvest 1,200 to 1,500 sticks per day. The basic idea was adapted to several different makes which came on the market a few years later.

Next came the bulk curers and a completely automatic tobacco harvester, the latter the result of experiments conducted at the Reynolds farm in Bertie County in the late sixties and early seventies. Curing is now done by oil or gas heat, with automatic thermostats to control the temperatures. Tying in "hands" is no longer required, and grading is greatly simplified, with the cured tobacco leaves being thrown together in sheets and placed on the auction warehouse floors in that manner.

The first bulk tobacco curing barn in the county was placed in operation by Farmer A. Tom Winslow in July, 1961, on his farm between Hamilton and Palmyra. Interest in bulk curing waned for awhile, but the use of the barn is being rapidly expanded along with the use of an automatic harvester.

Despite all the mechanization and automation that has taken place, production of good quality tobacco is still not an exact science; a considerable amount of experience and "know-how" is required, as well as a sizable quantity of hand work in certain phases. Martin County farmers have always prided themselves on the quality of their tobacco. Shortly after the crop was reintroduced in the county around the turn of the century, a number of people from other sections where tobacco was being grown were employed to come here and teach local farmers some of the fundamentals of its production and marketing. James G. Staton of Williamston and T. B. Slade, Sr., of Hamilton were among those who employed these specialists, many of whom remained to become leaders in other facets of community life as well. Among those who came to the county to teach tobacco culture and marketing at that time were the Critchers from Granville County; William S. Mallory, Ellis Malone, and Will Capps of Nash County; W. T. Meadows of Durham, and others.

The knowledge imparted by those early instructors—adapted to local conditions and improved by time and experience—along with the improved techniques, equipment, and knowledge gained from agricultural agents, extension workers, and experiments conducted by N. C. State University specialists account for the county's high standing as a producer of good tobacco. Production of tobacco in this section was, and still largely is, a family undertaking with all members taking part. Housewives and even small children leave the house for the fields to help with the crop, especially at harvest time; and the hard-won knowledge of tobacco culture is transmitted from generation to generation by direct application.

In 1938 more than 50 people were interviewed in an attempt to learn the identity of the first man to grow tobacco in the county when the crop started its comeback. No definite answer was received, but most agreed the time was around 1890. Some said William E. Tice of the Hayes Swamp section or Levi Jones of Bear Grass was first. Others believed Lillian Harmon Daniel and John Manning were first; and still others claimed Lonnie Ricks and John Dupree, natives of Nash County, planted the earliest tobacco on the Lanier farm in Williams Township. Also in the list of pioneers was John Cooke, who had a small crop on some of the land where Williamston's Woodlawn Cemetery is now located.

The elder Roger S. Critcher planted about 50 acres to tobacco for J. G. Staton in 1899 and contracted to instruct a number of farmers in methods of cultivating and harvesting the crop. A year or two later E. W. Garrett came to this county and made contracts to instruct about 20 farmers at $20 apiece in producing tobacco. Marion Burroughs, after planting a limited acreage in preceding years, had about 40 acres of the crop while operating the farm where Park Apartments are now located in Williamston's "New Town." Two years later, King's Weekly, published in Greenville, had a brief note from its Hamilton correspondent stating, "Tobacco barns continue to go up. More tobacco will be planted in this section than ever before."

J. Sidney Mallory, executive director of the ASCS office in Williamston, says his father, Will Mallory, told him about the method used in transporting tobacco to warehouse floors before the first market was established in this county at Robersonville in 1900. His father came to Martin County about that time as one of the men employed to instruct people of this section in the cultivation and marketing of tobacco. He said the leaf would be carried on mule-drawn carts to the railroad station in Everetts (which was near where he was located) to meet passenger trains. The train would wait while the sticks of tobacco were carefully stacked in the baggage car and moved to Rocky Mount for sale. William E. Tice, another pioneer grower, said tobacco was packed in a hogshead around an axle and the entire hogshead would be rolled to market in Wilson by mule and horse power.

The ups and downs of tobacco during the early days of development in the county may be seen from a newspaper report in September, 1903, that farmers in the Gold Point area were sick with the prices, which averaged around $6 to $7 per hundred pounds during that season.

Transplanting was one of the earliest of the unpleasant tasks connected with tobacco production to be mechanized to some extent. The first transplanter in this county is believed to have been made by Bemis and was purchased in 1914 from the Harrison Brothers General Store in Williamston by Wheeler Martin, Sr. Drawn by mules, it was used first on what was later to be known as the fair grounds farm just west of Williamston, Frank Weaver, Sr., being the operator. A short time later, the machine accompanied by its operator, was put aboard a freight train in Williamston and taken to the Darden farm owned by Mr. Martin near Dardens and used there.

The first completely automatic tobacco harvesting machine owned in this county was purchased jointly by Mrs. Mary Lilley, Milton Bennett, Sr., and Robert Peel of the Oak City area and put into use on their farms the third week of July, 1972. It was of the type developed at the Reynolds farm in Bertie County in cooperation with agricultural engineers from N. C. State University. Made in the plant of Harrington Manufacturing Company in Lewiston under the trade name "Roanoke," the machine sold for about $14,000 at that time. Designed to be operated by three men, it would harvest about six acres daily, and was said to be very successful.

Bulk curing in barns developed for that purpose has come into general use in many sections of the county in recent years, with those in the Robersonville and Gold Point areas leading the way. While there was some hesitancy on the part of buyers to buy bulk-cured leaf at the start, this completely vanished as more and more farmers began turning to the process.

Tobacco production in Martin County received its greatest impetus with the opening of local markets. Robersonville had the first auction market, opening on August 7, 1900, with two warehouses. The Williamston market did not come into being until two years later, opening with two warehouses on August 6, 1902. Since then sales on the two markets have fluctuated with the size of the crops, but they have continued active and highly competitive with each other and with other markets in the belt.

ROBERSONVILLE TOBACCO MARKET

The first season's sales on the Robersonville market in 1900 were around three million pounds, while in 1973 sales aggregated 10,126,213 pounds, bringing an all-time record high in dollars, $8,955,011. The Williamston market likewise sold only a few million pounds during its first season, 1902, while in 1973 sales totaled 11,703,162 pounds, which also brought a record high of $10,357,826.92. The two markets combined are now selling about 35 per cent more tobacco than is produced in the county, demonstrating not only that most of the tobacco now raised in the county is being sold on local markets but that these markets are also attracting substantial poundage from other counties.

J. C. Andrews was one of the pioneers in tobacco who was a prime mover in starting the tobacco market in Robersonville. In the early part of 1900 he was designated a "soliciting agent" to seek subscriptions to buy the land and erect the necessary buildings for the market. He succeeded and the market opened August 7 that year. He was a native of Martin County who had gained some experience in the tobacco business in Richmond before returning to be with his parents in their declining years on a farm near Robersonville, where he became one of the six earliest tobacco growers in the county. For several years he was a "drummer" for the Greenville market, broadening his experience with the "golden weed" in another direction before becoming one of the pioneer warehouse operators on the Robersonville market.

According to the Robersonville Weekly News of July 31, 1903, Mr. Andrews formed a partnership with J. W. Ferrell and bought the Carolina and Southern Warehouses there, as well as two prize houses, in preparation for the 1903 selling season, which was to open August 4. He and Ferrell were listed as proprietors of the Carolina Warehouse, while J. J. Gentry & Company, a new firm, was to operate the Southern Warehouse. Taylor Warehouse was to be operated that year by W. H. Adkins, J. H. Taylor, and R. A. Bailey, the article stating that this was the same firm as that operating the previous year. Mr. Adkins continued his connection with the Robersonville Market through 1947, when he entered upon his 46th consecutive year as a warehouse proprietor and dean of all the warehousemen in the county. He came to Robersonville from Winston as a buyer in the early days of the market and was well known to tobacco growers throughout eastern North Carolina.

The list of buyers on the Robersonville market in 1901 included the following: C. A. Walker, who represented American Tobacco Company, Richmond, Va.; A. S. Herndon, Richmond, Va.; J. M. Covington and John C. McAdams, Danville, Va.; T. P. Lyon, Winston; Rufus Bowen, Roxboro; W. S. Francis, Asheville; J. W. Hooker, Hillsborough; Hunter Fleming, Clarksville, Va.; and W. H. Adkins, Winston.

It is known that the firm of Andrews and Ferrell operated the Carolina Warehouse when the Robersonville market first opened in 1900, but it has not been possible to definitely identify the proprietors of the Southern Warehouse which opened at the same time. The following year, 1901, J. J. Trotter of Reidsville, W. J. Bugg of Chase City, Va., and J. C. Andrews managed the Carolina Warehouse, under the firm name of Trotter, Andrews & Company. The firm of Brinkley and Hooker operated the Southern Warehouse.

On January 30, 1902, stockholders of Robersonville Tobacco Warehouse Company, which owned the Carolina and Southern

Warehouses, held a meeting and sold one-half acre of land to J. H. Taylor, who next day started construction of Robersonville's third tobacco auction house. It was 80 by 150 feet in size. Mr. Taylor went into partnership with W. H. Adkins and R. A. Bailey to operate the Taylor Warehouse that year under the firm name of Taylor, Adkins & Bailey. It is not certain as to who operated the other two houses that year. J. J. Gentry & Brother managed the Southern Warehouse in 1903, with Ferrell & Andrews again at the Carolina, and the same firm of Taylor, Adkins & Bailey at the Taylor Warehouse.

There is a gap in the Robersonville market record after 1903, but it is known from newspaper accounts that Taylor withdrew from the business, selling his interest to his partners, and the warehouse name was changed to Adkins & Bailey. It continued to be known by this name until it was destroyed by fire on April 13, 1968. Thornberg & Morton were proprietors of the Carolina Warehouse in 1907, while W. H. Adkins and R. A. Bailey continued as proprietors of the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse right up to Mr. Bailey's retirement in 1935. This was the longest continuous partnership in the history of the tobacco industry in Martin County. Mr. Adkins' son, Robert K. Adkins, came into the firm in 1924; and I. Mayo Little, son-in-law of Mr. Bailey, was added to the firm the following year, 1925.

From 1908 until 1930 the record of the Robersonville mareket is somewhat sketchy. N. D. Young and W. Z. Morton formed a partnership to operate the Planters Warehouse in 1908, while Adkins and Bailey continued as proprietors of the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse through the entire period, with the additions listed above in 1924 and 1925. A warehouse called the "Farmers Consolidated" operated in 1909 and 1910, but the names of its proprietors are not known. Robert E. Grimes, Marion Green, and Henry K. Green began operations at the Farmers Warehouse in 1915, and R. E. Grimes was still involved in its operation in 1921, although many of the records are missing.

In 1930, a newspaper reported that the New Red Front Warehouse was built that year and was being operated by Jimmie Taylor and Jim Gray. Haywood Everett and J. R. Morris were listed as managers of the Central Warehouse, and the firm of Adkins, Bailey, Little & Adkins was at the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse. In 1934 Adkins, Bailey, Little & Adkins were again at the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse, while the Red Front was under the direction of Jim Gray, Charlie Gray, and Edgar Johnson.

In 1935 there were three warehouse firms in operation in Robersonville. The firm of Adkins, Bailey, Little & Adkins was again at the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse; the Red Front was under the direction of Jim and Charlie Gray and Edgar Johnson again; and the Planters was managed by Holt Evans and Joe Moye. The 1936 line-up was about the same, except for some shifting around of the partners. W. H. Adkins, I. M. Little, and R. K. Adkins comprised the management of the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse following the retirement of Mr. Bailey. Joe Moye and Edgar Johnson had taken over the reins at Central Warehouse; and Jim and Charlie Gray were proprietors of the Red Front Warehouse.

The same firms continued at the Adkins & Bailey and Red Front Warehouses in 1937, but an entirely new group came in to manage the Central—E. G. Anderson, B. T. Barnett, C. L. Nelms, and Victor Shelburne. The only change in the market line-up for 1938 was that E. G. Anderson and "Doug" Morrow took over at the Central Warehouse, the personnel remaining the same at Red Front and Adkins & Bailey. The 1939 roster of warehouses and proprietors also had only one change: Jim and Charlie Gray, in addition to managing the Red Front Warehouse had agreed to help E. G. Anderson and J. C. Vann in operating the Central Warehouse.

In 1940 management of the three warehouses on the Robersonville market became stable, with the same proprietors at the same warehouses for seven years, through 1946. W. H. Adkins, I. M. Little, and R. K. Adkins continued at the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse, while Jim and Charlie Gray and E. G. Anderson managed the Red Front and Central Warehouses. In 1947 there was a complete realignment, several new tobacconists appearing on the scene. The Planters Warehouse was constructed that year, being completed just in time for the opening. V. G. Taylor, Herbert Highsmith, and E. G. Anderson joined the firm of W. H. Adkins, I. M. Little, and R. K. Adkins in directing the affairs of both the Planters and Adkins & Bailey Warehouses. Jim Gray and Charlie Gray sold their Red Front and Central Warehouses to George R. Walden and J. W. (Buck) Peay, and the latter partnership assumed management of those two houses. In 1948 there was another realignment, operations of the Adkins & Bailey, Central and Red Front Warehouses being consolidated under the management of I. M. Little, R. K. Adkins, George R. Walden, and Buck Peay. W. H. Adkins had retired from the Adkins & Bailey firm after 46 years of service to the market. The New Planters

Warehouses Nos. 1 and 2 were managed by E. G. Anderson, Herbert Highsmith, and V. G. Taylor.

Jim and Charlie Gray returned to the market in 1949, joining I. M. Little, R. K. Adkins, and J. W. Peay in operating the Adkins & Bailey, Red Front, and Central Warehouses. E. G. Anderson, Herbert Highsmith, and V. G. Taylor continued at the Planters Warehouses, although Mr. Taylor was not active in the operations. The same firms remained at the same warehouses through the 1952 season, when the Central Warehouse was dropped from the list. Little, Adkins, Peay, Gray, and Gray continued to operate the Red Front and Adkins & Bailey Warehouses through 1960, with Jack Sharp joining the firm in 1959.

The Adkins & Bailey and Red Front Warehouses were managed in 1961 by Jim and Charlie Gray, R. K. Adkins, and Jack Sharp, with James E. Gray joining the firm in 1962. E. G. Anderson and Herbert Highsmith remained in control at the Planters Warehouses until 1965, when they were joined by Frank Everett and Hassell Worsley. The same firms were in charge of the market at the same warehouses in 1966 and 1967. The old Adkins & Bailey Warehouse was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1968, and a new one was quickly built in time for the market opening that year. It was first called the New Adkins & Bailey Warehouse, but in 1970 the named was changed to Gray's Warehouse. The same firms continued their operations on the market through that year.

A major change occurred in 1971, when the Planters Warehouse was sold to Norman Hardee and Edwin Lee, who operated it that season under the name of the Hardee Warehouse. James E. Gray, Jim Gray, R. K. Adkins, and Jack Sharp continued at the Red Front, Gray's, and Central.

Bringing the Robersonville market history up to 1974, Norman Hardee left the Hardee Warehouse firm in 1972, but it continued under the same name with Edwin Lee as owner and operator. The death of Robert K. Adkins on August 5, 1972, shortly before the market was to open, reduced membership in the firm operating the other houses to three, James E. Gray, Jim Gray, and Jack Sharp. All the operating personnel of the Robersonville warehouses continued the same during the 1972 and 1973 seasons.

In several different seasons, Robersonville had the distinction of being the largest auction market in the belt with a single set of buyers. One of the major contributions to its success was vigorous promotion of the market by merchants and businessmen in the community, with the entire town cooperating. Another major factor was redrying facilities, W. M. Scales & Company operating a plant there from 1926 until 1944, when Fields Tobacco Company acquired the facility. Southeastern Tobacco Company, with Oscar Burch as president, succeeded Fields in 1952 and continued the redrying operations.

WILLIAMSTON TOBACCO MARKET

The movement to establish a tobacco market in Williamston was launched in 1901, when a meeting was held on October 23 to organize and incorporate the Martin County Tobacco Warehouse Company. D. S. Biggs was elected president, other officers being Alonzo Hassell, vice president; Asa Tom Crawford, secretary; and W. A. Ellison, treasurer. The board of directors was composed of D. S. Biggs, J. R. Mobley, J. D. Simpson, C. W. Keith, Eli Gurganus, Kader Lilley, N. S. Peel, Arthur Anderson, and Wheeler Martin. The finance committee was composed of Dr. J. B. H. Knight, S. S. Hadley, N. S. Peel, Eli Gurganus, J. W. Anderson, J. D. Leggett, Wheeler Martin, C. D. Carstarphen, and Kader Lilley.

That first meeting was followed by another on November 22, when the building committee decided to build two warehouses, each 80 by 180 feet, with a 40-foot vacant lot between. A "prize house," 40 by 80 feet, in which to regrade and pack tobacco in hogsheads for shipment, was also to be constructed. In later years, two additional "prize houses" were built between the two warehouses, and still later the partitions were removed to make the two into one big warehouse, named "Roanoke-Dixie." It operated under that name for many years until destroyed in a spectacular fire in 1963.

At a meeting of the building committee on December 13, 1901, the contract for construction of the first two warehouses was let to D. J. Rose of Rocky Mount. The contract price was $9,123, with work to start immediately and to be completed by June 1, 1902. It is presumed the price also included building the "prize house."

The work was completed on time, and the market opened with others in the belt on Wednesday, August 6, 1902. Those who were there for the occasion say whatever tobacco was bought that day was done entirely by guess, as buyers were unable to get close to the baskets on the floor, due to the large crowd of more than 2,000 in attendance. There was a brass band and State

Senator Harry W. Stubbs made an address of welcome that was remembered for many years. It was undoubtedly the biggest day in Williamston's history up to that time.

First sale on the market was held at the Dixie Warehouse, where E. L. Morgan was the proprietor. Mr. Morgan not only managed the warehouse, but he also did the auctioneering and ran the sale at the same time. Members of his force included W. M. Sitterson, W. S. Matthews, W. M. York, and J. Y. Monk. The Roanoke Warehouse was operated by James G. Staton and James D. Leggett as proprietors, with W. T. Meadows as manager. Mr. Meadows moved his family from Durham in June, 1903, and continued active on the Williamston market for many years. He was widely known throughout the tobacco belt as "Uncle Buck." Auctioneer for the Roanoke at its opening was Capt. C. A. W. Barham, Thad A. Joyner was the bookeeper, and F. S. Upton was the weigher.

Tobacco was selling relatively low at that time, and the market sold about 60,000 pounds that opening day for an average estimated at 10 cents. Farmers generally reported being pleaed with their sales. A number of tobacconists from other markets in the belt attended the opening to see how the new market would get started. Col. W. T. Burton, then of Greenville but later to become famous throughout the nation as a tobacco and land auctioneer in Wilson, attended and relieved the local autioneers several times, it being a very hot day. From its opening on August 6, 1902, to December 18, the market sold 2,854,000 pounds, and prospects were said at that time to be bright for selling over 3,000,000 pounds its first season.

Buyers on the market the first day included T. J. Smith, representing American Tobacco Company; D. W. Morris, representing Imperial Tobacco Company; J. Y. Monk, representing Shackelford & Monk; Mr. Cobb for Blackwell Durham Tobacco Company; J. W. York, representing J. W. York & Company; J. C. McAdams, J. S. Walden, W. S. Nichols, A. F. Kennedy, J. M. Beck, R. W. Satterthwaite, W. M. York, E. L. Mogan, R. S. Critcher, J. D. Leggett, J. G. Staton, and W. T. Meadows.

Management of the two warehouses in Williamston changed completely in the second year of operations. W. T. Meadows and W. M. York became proprietors of the Dixie Warehouse after E. L. Morgan left for Kinston, moving his family there in the spring of 1903. J. G. Staton and J. D. Leggett continued as proprietors of the Roanoke Warehouse, with J. G. Staton as manager. There were more changes in the next two years. Leggett got out of the warehouse business in 1904 and left the Roanoke to J. G. Staton, who continued as proprietor and manager. Meadows and York continued at the Dixie that year. Then in 1905 there was a completely new alignment, Meadows and Staton becoming proprietors of the Dixie, while Graham and Neal managed the Roanoke.

Eli Gurganus, J. G. Godard, and James G. Staton began construction of a new warehouse, called the Farmers, in 1905, and it was ready for operation in 1906, E. L. Morgan returning as manager for E. L. Morgan & Company. Thomas S. Graham operated the Roanoke, and Meadows & Cothran were proprietors of the Dixie. Thomas S. Graham continued as sole proprietor of the Roanoke Warehouse through the years 1907, 1908, 1909, and 1910. In 1907 Eli Gurganus and John T. Fishel were at the Farmers Warehouse and Meadows & Staton got together again to operate the Dixie. J. S. Turner was at the Dixie in 1908 while Tuggle & Gravely took over at the Farmers. From 1909 through 1913 there is no record of the Farmers Warehouse being in operation, so far as newspaper files are concerned.

Personnel of the various warehouse firms for the years 1908 through the early seventies are substantially as follows, as gleaned from files of the Williamston Enterprise:

1909: Turner & Gravely at the Dixie Warehouse; Thomas S. Graham at the Roanoke;

1910: W. M. York and Joe S. Stallings at the Dixie; Thomas S. Graham at the Roanoke;

1911: W. T. Meadows and J. G. Staton at the Dixie; probably Thomas S. Graham at the Roanoke;

1912: J. G. Staton at the Dixie; Eli Gurganus, W. A. James, and H. T. Beasley at the Roanoke;

1913: J. G. Staton and J. W. Hight at the Dixie; Eli Gurganus, W. Joseph Taylor, and W. A. James at the Roanoke;

1914: J. G. Staton and J. W. Hight at the Dixie; Eli Gurganus and W. A. James at the Farmers; W. Joe Taylor, Mc. D. Mobley, and H. M. Burras at the Roanoke;

1915: J. G. Staton and J. W. Hight at the Dixie; N. D. Young, previously on the Robersonville and Washington markets, at the Roanoke.

1916: Newspaper files for this year are missing, and it is not known who comprised the firms operating the two warehouses.

1917: A stock company was organized to build the Brick

Warehouse, which was managed from its opening through the season of 1920 by W. A. James; the Roanoke and Dixie Warehouses operated in 1917 for the first time as a single unit by J. D. King & Sons; the Farmers Warehouse was sold to and operated by Mc. D. Mobley, W. Joe Taylor, and J. W. Hight.

1918: Mobley, Taylor, and Hight again operated the Farmers Warehouse, J. G. Staton the Roanoke-Dixie, and W. A. James the Brick Warehouse;

1919: W. J. Taylor, J. W. Hight, and Henry D. Peel operated the Farmers; J. G. Staton the Roanoke-Dixie; and W. A. James the Brick Warehouse;

1920: J. G. Staton was again at the Roanoke-Dixie; W. A. James at the Brick; and it is not definite who was at the Farmers, possibly J. W. Hight;

1921: W. J. Taylor and J. G. Staton at the Roanoke-Dixie; Harry L. Meador at the Brick; and J. W. Hight at the Farmers.

1922: This was the year the farmers' cooperative association rented the Brick Warehouse and made it a receiving point for this county, with H. L. Meador as manager and F. W. Graves, a former buyer for Imperial Tobacco Company, as grader; J. W. Taylor and J. G. Staton were proprietors of the Roanoke-Dixie; and J. W. Hight was at the Farmers.

1923: The Roanoke and Dixie Warehouses were again under separate management, Sam J. Mangum of Durham joining Joe W. Taylor at the Dixie; O. L. Tucker, H. H. Morton, and E. G. Rogers were at the Roanoke; J. W. Hight continued to manage the Farmers; and H. L. Meador was manager for the "co-op" at the Brick Warehouse.

1924: H. L. Meador joined W. Joe Taylor in management of the Dixie; Will Rice and D. L. Spain were proprietors of the Farmers; W. B. Watts and H. H. Morton were at the Roanoke; and the "co-op" had rented the Brick Warehouse at the opening, although the name of the manager had not been made public at that time.

1925: The Brick Warehouse, renamed Timberlake's Warehouse, rejoined the ranks of the auction houses this year under management of H. A. and J. T. Timberlake and Evan Willard; Will Rice and Julius James were at the Farmers; Harry Meador and Joe Taylor were at the Dixie; and the proprietors of the Roanoke were H. H. Morton, W. B. Watts, R. T. Griffin, Jimmy Gurkin, and S. Claude Griffin.

1926: There was a completely new line-up this year with Frank Bennett, Jule T. Barnhill, and H. H. Morton at the Farmers; W. T.

Meadows, H. L. Meador, and W. B. Watts at the Roanoke-Dixie; and John D. Biggs, W. Joe Taylor, D. D. Stalls, Roy T. Griffin, and S. Claude Griffin at the Brick Warehouse.'

1927: The number of partners dwindled considerably from the preceding year, W. T. Meadows, H. L. Meador, and S. C. Griffin being at the Roanoke-Dixie; R. E. Grimes and Victor Shelburne at the Brick Warehouse; and Frank Bennett, H. Leman Barnhill, and Hubert H. Morton at the Farmers.

1928: W. T. Meadows, H. L. Meador, Joe Taylor, and Claude Griffin were at the Roanoke-Dixie; Frank Bennett, Leman Barnhill, and M. M. Veasey at the Farmers; H. H. Morton, W. B. Watts, and Roy T. Griffin at the Brick.

1929: The old Brick Warehouse was burned and a new one, called the Planters Warehouse was built during the off season, opening under the management of Haywood Everett of Robersonville and Evan Willard of Washington; H. L. Barnhill and W. R. Ingram were at the Farmers, a partnership that was to continue without change through the 1933 season; and W. T. Meadows, S. C. Griffin, H. L. Meador, and W. Joe Taylor were at the Roanoke-Dixie.

1930: Barnhill and Ingram were back at the Farmers; W. T. Meadows, Roy T. Griffin, and S. Claude Griffin were at the Roanoke-Dixie; and the Meador brothers, Harry L. and Roy, joined W. Joe Taylor in managing the Planters.

1931: S. Claude Griffin and W. Joe Taylor took over management of the Roanoke-Dixie; J. W. Berger and A. M. Perry comprised a new firm at the Planters; and Barnhill and Ingram were at the Farmers.

1932 and 1933: The same firms were at the same warehouses as in 1931, the first time this had happened in the history of the market.

1934: A completely new firm took over management of the Planters Warehouse that year, J. J. Cozart, George D. Foxworth, and Carlyle Langley; Charles Phaup joined H. L. Barnhill and W. R. Ingram at the Farmers; and Jimmie Taylor and Claude Griffin were back at the Roanoke-Dixie.

1935: The only change in the management personnel of the three warehouses that year was at the Farmers, where W. Early Bass succeeded Charles Phaup in the firm with Barnhill and Ingram; Jimmie Taylor and Claude Griffin were back at the Roanoke-Dixie; and Cozart, Foxworth & Langley were again at the Planters.

1936: Barnhill & Ingram returned to control of the Farmers; Claude Griffin & Jule James were at the Roanoke-Dixie; and George Foxworth and Holt Evans were at the Planters.

1937: Claude Griffin and Jimmie Taylor were again at the Roanoke-Dixie, but the management of the other firms was materially altered; W. R. Ingram and Johnny Gurkin joined to manage the Planters; Leman Barnhill, Holt Evans, and Joe Moye were proprietors of the Farmers.

1938: The modern new Carolina Warehouse was used for the first time that year, being managed, along with the Planters, by the firm of Sylvester Lilley, Arlie Belch, Johnny Gurkin, and W. R. Ingram; Griffin and Taylor were back at the Roanoke-Dixie; and the Farmers was managed by Barnhill, Evans, and Moye.

1939: Only two firms operated on the Williamston market that season. Barnhill, Evans, and Moye were proprietors of the Farmers and Planters Warehouses; while Claude Griffin, Jimmie Taylor, Sylvester Lilley, Arlie Belch, and Johnny Gurkin managed the Roanoke-Dixie and Carolina Warehouses.

1940: The same firm, Barnhill, Evans and Moye, was back at the Planters and Farmers Warehouses; and the Roanoke-Dixie and Carolina Warehouses were under the direction of Claude Griffin, Jimmie Taylor, Sylvester Lilley, and Johnny Gurkin.

1941: There were again some new firms that season. Claude Griffin and Jimmie Taylor operated the Roanoke-Dixie Wraehouse; Sylvester Lilley, W. D. Odom, Johnny Gurkin, and John A. Manning were proprietors of the Carolina; and Barnhill, Evans, and Moye were at the Farmers and Planters Warehouses.

1942 and 1943: The first two years under World War II conditions, the Roanoke-Dixie continued under the leadership of Claude Griffin and Jimmie Taylor; Edward Corey joined Leman Barnhill and Joe Moye at the Farmers; and the Carolina-Planters Warehouses were operated by Sylvester Lilley, John A. Manning, Carlyle Langley, and Johnny Gurkin.

1944: From 1944 through 1957, a 14-year period, there were only two operating firms in each year, and there was a ten-year stretch in which there were no changes in either the warehouses or management personnel. In 1944 Claude Griffin, Jimmy Taylor, Leman Barnhill, and Jule James were proprietors of the Roanoke-Dixie and Farmers Warehouses, while the firm of Lilley, Gurkin, Manning, and Langley returned to the Carolina and Planters Warehouses.

1945: In that year Elmo Lilley became associated with Claude

Griffin, Jimmie Taylor, and Leman Barnhill in the operation of the Farmers and Carolina Warheouses, while Carlyle Langley, John A. Manning, W. R. Edmondson, Edward Corey, and Johnny Gurkin were proprietors of the Planters and Roanoke-Dixie.

1946: Edward Corey, W. B. Edmondson, Carlyle Langley, and Johnny Gurkin were at the Planters and Roanoke-Dixie that season; while the same firm as in the preceding year, Griffin, Taylor, Lilley, and Barnhill, was back at the Farmers-Carolina.

1948 through 1957: During that ten-year period—with the exception of one year, 1954—there were no changes in either the warehouse or management personnel: Carlyle Langley, Johnny Gurkin, Urbin and Rossell Rogers were proprietors of the Roanoke-Dixie and Planters Warehouses; and Claude Griffin, Jimmie Taylor, Elmo Lilley, and Leman Barnhill operated the Farmers and Carolina Warehouses.

In 1954 a large warehouse was constructed on the north side of the new U. S. Highway 64 by-pass, about one block west of the Skewarkee intersection. It was built by King Roberts of Fuquay Springs, but sold just prior to the opening sales to three members of the Reynolds family of Owensboro, Ky., Bethel Reynolds and his two sons, Marson and Eugene. They, in partnership with J. M. and C. G. Smothers of Reidsville, operated the house for only one season, under the name of New Deal Warehouse. The house then remained idle except for storage purposes until 1959, when it was purchased and put into operation by Urbin and Rossell Rogers as the Rogers Warehouse. H. Leman Barnhill later joined the firm, which continued its operation through the 1974 season.

1958: Three firms returned to the market that year, but the make-up of the several firms underwent some changes. Urbin and Rossell Rogers managed the Planters Warehouse; Johnny Gurkin and Carlyle Langley were at the Roanoke-Dixie; and Elmo Lilley, Leman Barnhill, and Claude Griffin were at the Farmers and Carolina Warehouses.

1959: This was the year the market made its first move toward its present location on the highway by-pass at Williamston; Urbin and Rossell Rogers bought the New Deal Warehouse west of the Skewarkee intersection and renamed it the Rogers Warehouse, by which it has been known since; two new faces appeared on the market, Jim Pierce of Windsor and Fisher Harris joinining Carlyle Langley and Jimmie Taylor as proprietors of the Roanoke-Dixie Warehouse; and Elmo Lilley, Leman Barnhill, and Claude Griffin were again at the Farmers and Planters Warehouses.

1960: There was another realignment that year; the Roanoke-Dixie and Planters Warehouses were operated by Elmo Lilley, J. T. Griffin, Hugh B. Griffin, Jim Pierce, and Fisher Harris; John A. Griffin and Leman Barnhill were at the Farmers; and Urbin and Rossell Rogers returned to the Rogers Warehouse.

1961: Thurman O. Nicholson, "Spot" Baker, Eli Marion Taylor, John A. Griffin, and Leman Barnhill were at the Farmers; the New Dixie Warehouse was built and began operating with Elmo Lilley, Fisher Harris, and Jim Pierce as proprietors; and Urbin and Rossell Rogers continued at the Rogers Warehouse.

1962: The only change in the market operation that year was the addition of another unit to the New Dixie Warehouse, with the same three firms at the same warehouses as in 1961. That season was notable in several respects: it was the final year of auctions in the Farmers Warehouse, which had been in continuous use since 1906; it was also the last year in which sales were held in the old "Tobacco Town" warehouses, the market completing its move to the highway by-pass after the 1962 season; and finally, it was the last year in which more than two firms were in operation on the market—at least through the 1974 season.

1963: Leman Barnhill joined Urbin and Rossell Rogers in the operation of the Rogers Warehouse that season, a partnership which has continued since; Elmo Lilley, Fisher Harris and Jim Pierce continued at the New Dixie Warehouse.

1964 through 1973: Jim Pierce dropped out of the firm operating the New Dixie Warehouse, Elmo Lilley and Fisher Harris remaining as proprietors; the firm of Leman Barnhill and Urbin and Rossell Rogers also continued as operators of the Rogers Warehouse in the following ten years.

The year the Williamston market opened, the proprietors of the two original warehouses and the American Tobacco Company had a "prize house" built on an adjacent lot, and tobacco was made ready there for shipment to both domestic and foreign buyers. E. L. Morgan managed one of the warehouses the first year, and after he left, two of the "prize rooms" were converted into a peanut mill, which later burned. According to "Uncle Buck" Meadows—who was active in various capacities on the Williamston market for its first 30 or more years—he and J. G. Staton then installed a steam tobacco redrying plant on a lot adjoining the warehouses; and, beginning in about 1903, between 500 and 600 hogsheads of tobacco were put up there each year and exported—as shown by bills of lading issued by the local railroad agent, W. A. Ellison—to purchasers in England, Germany, China, and Japan. Meadows said the freight rate from Williamston to London in those days was about 50 cents per 100 pounds, compared with $4.50 per 100 pounds charged by 1920.

A redrying plant operated by F. W. Graves & Company in 1920 was used as an annex to Meadows and Staton's steam plant and played an important part in the development of the Williamston market. W. I. Skinner bought the plant in 1925, installed new machinery and expanded the operation considerably. Following his death, his son, W. I. Skinner, Jr., and J. E. King continued the business for the remainder of their lives, and it was still in operation as W. I. Skinner & Company, Inc., through the 1974 season.

The tobacco auction business of the Williamston market was centered around the X-type intersection of Washington and South Haughton Streets for well over 50 years. The first two warehouses, the Roanoke and the Dixie, were located next to the railroad on the east side of Washington Street. The third warehouse, the Farmers, was built on the west side of South Haughton in 1908; and the fourth warehouse, the Brick, was constructed ten years later, in 1918, on the east side of South Haughton. "Tobacco Town," as the area was called, made its first move to the south in 1936, when the Carolina Warehouse was built about a block farther out Washington Street.

Migration of the Williamston tobacco market to its later location on the highway by-pass, or Boulevard as it is sometimes called, began in 1959, when C. Urbin and J. Rossell Rogers purchased what was then called the New Deal Warehouse, located on Taylor Street between the Boulevard and Carolina Avenue. They improved and enlarged the building, adding storage rooms at the back, and it has since been operated by them as Rogers Warehouse, H. Leman Barnhill joining the firm in 1963.

The market's move to the Boulevard was completed in 1961 when Elmo Lilley, Fisher Harris, and Jim Pierce constructed and began operation of the New Dixie Warehouse, located on Factory Street just off the Boulevard. As the market became established in its new location, the older warehouse buildings uptown began to be used for other purposes, principally for general storage, fertilizer, and farm crops. One of them, the Carolina Warehouse, in 1961 became the home of June Day Manufacturing Company, maker of women's bathing suits; and the two original warehouses; Roanoke and Dixie, were completely destroyed in a spectacular fire on June 1, 1963, the lot since being used as a parking area.

There has been considerable fluctuation in the amount of tobacco sold each year on the Williamston market. Some of the variations were caused by crop conditions and others by prevailing prices. Prior to the control programs, when prices were high, farmers would increase their acreages the following year, and the opposite was true when prices were low. The highest season average price paid for tobacco on the local market in its 72-year history, from 1902 through 1973, was $88.50 per 100 pounds in 1973. The lowest season average over the same period was $7.32 per 100 pounds in 1903, the second year of the market's existence. Season average prices per 100 pounds in the 72-year history of the market follow:

1902	$ 8.08
1903	7.32
1904	9.72
1905	10.58
1906	11.27
1907	11.83
1908	11.07
1909	12.83
1910	13.16
1911	14.55
1912	19.02
1913	21.13
1914	11.25
1915	12.52
1916	19.41
1917	31.60
1918	37.19
1919	49.65
1920	$19.68
1921	25.68
1922	25.10
1923	20.81
1924	22.08
1925	21.86
1926	21.42
1927	25.86
1928	24.02
1929	20.10
1930	19.90
1931	13.78
1932	8.30
1933	16.16
1934	28.50★
1935	20.30★
1936	23.30
1937	24.00★
1938	22.60★
1939	23.65
1940	20.00
1941	30.00
1942	39.00
1943	40.70
1944	42.87
1945	44.14
1946	50.72
1947	41.19
1948	48.44
1949	49.05
1950	57.29
1951	55.21
1952	50.28
1953	59.44
1954	55.81
1955	51.96

1956	50.17	1965	61.00
1957	50.25	1966	67.17
1958	55.14	1967	62.56
1959	57.70	1968	67.25
1960	59.84	1969	72.49
1961	65.38	1970	72.40
1962	57.88	1971	78.69
1963	57.19	1972	87.88
1964	52.27	1973	88.50

★ Figures not available for Williamston market. State average for these years used.

Near-panic conditions prevailed in the tobacco belt in 1920, when the markets opened at an average of about 20 cents, following the preceding season's peak average of around 50 cents. The crop was a very expensive one, having been produced by farmers in expectation of high prices continuing. Mass meetings were held and many farmers signed pledges to reduce the crop for the following year by at least one-third and calling for a more orderly marketing system. Meetings were held in Williamston in October and December, and a representative was sent to a state meeting in Raleigh on January 12, 1921, when it was agreed to try to organize the North Carolina Tobacco Growers Association and cut the 1921 tobacco crop by 50 per cent.

In July, meetings were held in Jamesville, Macedonia, Robersonville and Hassell to sign up members of the newly organized association. A. O. Alford of the State Extension Service and J. B. Swain were speakers. Enough members were secured in the county in 1921 to assure operation of a "Co-op Warehouse" the following year, the organization renting the Brick Warehouse in Williamston as a delivery point and naming Harry L. Meador to manage it. He continued at that post through the 1923 marketing season, the movement finally dying out. R. J. Work, of the Kentucky Tobacco Growers Association, spoke in Robersonville and Williamston in August, 1922, urging farmers to join the movement, but it received only limited support in Martin County and did not survive very long.

Tobacco reached another low point of its history in Martin County in the depression year of 1932, when the Williamston market's season average dropped to $8.30 per 100 pounds. The first time in nearly 30 years that it had been below $10. Farmers did little more than grumble that year, but when markets in this belt opened on August 29, 1933, averaging around $10 per 100, tempers flared. Sales were forcibly stopped on several markets, and a spontaneous meeting of more than 2,000 growers was held in Raleigh August 31, asking Governor J. C. B. Ehringhaus to aid in working out a solution.

By proclamation, the governor requested, and secured, cooperation of growers and warehousemen in calling a tobacco sales holiday until arrangements could be made to secure federal government aid in exchange for contracts to reduce tobacco acreage in 1934 and 1935. The sales holiday continued for three weeks, during which details of the first control program were worked out, and the Williamston market ended the season with an average of $16.16. This marked the beginning of the tobacco control program administered by the federal government which stabilized tobacco production throughout the producing areas.

J. G. Staton of Williamston, V. G. Taylor of Everetts, and J. H. Etheridge of Goose Nest Township represented Martin County at a second state meeting in Raleigh on September 6, 1933, when a whirlwind campaign was launched to get farmers to sign up for the control program. Farmers in this county supported the program just about 100 per cent and the markets were reopened September 25. The agreement reached later between the government and domestic tobacco companies provided for a 17-cent average for the remainder of the season;, retroactive to the date the markets reopened, and cash benefits were paid those growers pledging to reduce their acreage in 1934 and 1935.

The control program has remained in effect since, with the exception of one year. In 1938, tobacco growers over the entire producing area failed to return the necessary two-thirds majority necessary to retain the program, although Martin County farmers voted 2,407 to 287 in favor of it. As a consequence, no controls were in effect in 1939, but dissatisfaction was so great that a special election was called on October 5, 1939, and the control program was put back into effect by a wide majority throughout the belt. Martin County was again in the forefront of the vote for the control program, the vote in the county being 3,367 for and only 26 against.

More recently, the control programs have been voted on every three years, with growers throughout the producing areas continuing to favor control by much greater majorities than the necessary two-thirds. Prices for the different crops are dependent upon two main factors—parity and subsidies—two words that are now part of the language of all farmers.

CORN ACREAGE LARGEST

Tobacco, peanuts, and cotton have been the principal cash crops in the county for many years now, but more acres are planted to corn than to any other single commodity. However, a relatively small percentage of this crop is marketed, most of it having been used as feed for workstock throughout the past century and during the early part of this one. Tractors have just about completely displaced work animals in recent years, and a sizable percentage of the corn produced is now going to market, although over half of it still is retained on the farms as feed for various kinds of livestock produced for sale, including swine, cattle, and poultry.

Martin County's corn crop in 1973 was a record in nearly all categories. The average planted (37,000 acres), was considerably higher than the previous high of 34,300 planted in 1959.

New highs were recorded in yield per acre, 100 bushels; price per bushel, $2.30; and total value of product sold, $2,760,000. Yet only 33 per cent of the 3,700,000 bushels raised was sold, the remaining 2,500,000 bushels being fed to livestock raised on the farms for market. These figures were obtained from the office of the County Extension Service in Williamston.

Astounding progress has been made in the average yield per acre in this county. While accurate records are not obtainable on the county level prior to 1928, some state statistics for acreage and yield go back to 1866. This county's average yield of corn per acre for most of the years when both state and county figures are available show Martin to be about two bushels per acre higher than the state average. The state average yield per acre was 9.5 bushels in 1866. The state yield ranged from that figure to around 15 bushels per acre in 1905. It was 1917 before an average of 20 bushels per acre was attained in the state. Martin County's average yield was from 18 to 27 bushels per acre from 1928 until it finally reached 37 bushels in 1947, the same year the state average managed to get up to the 30-bushel mark. The county passed the 40-bushel mark in 1949, when it averaged 42 bushels per acre on 29,390 acres. The state did not reach the 40-bushel mark until 1956, when 41 bushels were recorded. The county continued to gain, reaching 51 bushels in 1958 and going up to 85 bushels in 1967. The average yield per acre then dropped back for a few years; it was only 50 bushels in 1971, but that figure doubled in the official estimate for 1973, which was 100 bushels.

Production and value of the corn crop in the county have varied widely in recent years. In 1931 only 20,975 acres were planted to the crop in the county; the yield was 22 bushels per acre, 455,124 bushels were produced, the average price was 42 cents per bushel, and the total value of the crop was only $191,152. The next year, in the depths of the depression, was even worse, although 931 more acres were planted. The acreage was 21,906, the average yield was only 18 bushels—the lowest in relatively recent years, total production was 386,568 bushels, and the price per bushel was 41 cents, total value of the crop being $158,493.

Back in October, 1908, Hyman Warren, a farmer from the Gold Point area, as an example of the superior seed corn he was using, displayed three ears of corn in Williamston which shelled out three pints of kernels. A year or so later, on February 2, 1910, at a farmers' institute held in Williamston, Augustus Williams, of the Robersonville area, was presented a $1 cash prize for displaying the best ear of seed corn.

There are vast differences between the methods of producing corn approved by agricultural authorities in the earlier years and those in general use today. Around 1910, and for a number of years afterwards, corn was "borrowed off" with a turning plow, and little fertilizer was used. After the plants came up in the spring, stalks were thinned out in the rows until there were two to three feet of space between each "hill," and the crop was then cultivated and hoed two or three times during the growing season until "laid by" around the latter part of June. Today's methods call for the seed to be "sowed" in the rows, leaving little space between the stalks, with substantial applications of fertilizer in both solid and liquid form, and little or no cultivation during the growing season. There are presently 10 to 20 times more plants per acre than in former years, and the yield is very materially increased.

Another change brought about by replacement of workstock with the tractor is elimination of the drudgery of "pulling fodder," part of the routine associated with growing corn in the old days. The late Kader Lilley, prominent farmer and merchant in the early part of this century, reported an incident in this connection in 1917. S. C. Griffin, a neighbor, was away from his home in Griffins Township about that time; and his three small children, noting it was time to harvest the fodder, tackled the job themselves. Too small to reach the top of the stalks from the gorund, they hitched a mule to a tobacco truck and while one drove, the other two pulled the fodder, making good progress. Mr. Lilley commended the youngsters for their industriousness and, it being wartime, expressed the hope that others would follow their example by doing what they could for themselves, their parents, and their country.

SOYBEAN CROP IN COUNTY

The soybean, relatively unknown fifty years ago, reached the status of a major crop in 1973, when it ranked fourth in total value of all field crops produced in Martin County. Records on soybeans go back only to 1925, when 430 acres were harvested in the county. The yield then was 12.9 bushels per acre for a total of 6,700 bushels, valued at $1.71 per bushel, the entire crop being worth but $11,450 at that time.

Compare these figures with those of 1973, when the county extension office estimated that 15,000 acres were harvested, the average yield being a record 32 bushels per acre or a total of 480,000 bushels. The average price was said to have been $5.60 per bushel, for a total value of $2,128,000. For comparison, the tobacco crop in 1973 was worth $14,814,653; peanuts were second, at $7,750,980; and corn sales were third at $2,760,000.

With 430 acres planted in 1925, it was 1930 before the soybean acreage passed the 1,000 acre mark, totaling 1,290 in that year. That was also the first year that production passed the 10,000-bushel figure, with 14,260 bushels being harvested. Acreage steadily increased until 1942, when it was up to 4,110. It then started declining, dropping down to 1,520 acres in 1946. Next it moved back up, reaching its all-time maximum in 1967 at 17,600 acres. The yield also fluctuated widely over the years, a low point being reached in 1943 at 7.7 bushels per acre, while the high was thirty years later, in 1973, at 32 bushels per acre. The lowest total production was in 1929, when 5,510 bushels were harvested; and the record high production was in 1973, when 480,000 bushels were harvested. Soybeans first became a million-dollar crop in this county in 1967, when 17,600 acres were planted, the average yield was 23 bushels per acre, and the price was $2.50 per bushel, returning a gross $1,012,000. Value of the crop in 1969 was almost a million dollars, and the 1973 crop was worth more than two millions.

The future of soybeans as a major income producer for farmers in this section was first predicted back in April, 1933, when a Norfolk soybean mill representative visited Martin County in an effort to stimulate interest in the crop. At that time about 2,000 acres were being planted to soybeans in the county and the production was around 22,000 bushels, but the price the year before was only about 60 cents per bushel.

OTHER LEADING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Other major income producers in 1973 for farmers of Martin County, in addition to field crops, included swine, worth some $4,180,000; cattle, worth about $1,076,500; poultry and eggs, valued at $1,700,000; and forestry products, including pulpwood and lumber sold by farmers, valued at an estimated $2,350,000. The value of pulpwood and lumber listed as non-farm income amounted to an additional $4,380,000. This came from land owned by manufacturers and other firms not engaged in farming.

The county's farm income in 1973, according to estimates from the county extension service office, was augmented by a number of other products, including nearly $200,000 worth of cucumbers, sweet potatoes valued at more than $100,000, watermelons valued at $38,500 and nursery and greenhouse products estimated to be around $126,500. Total value of all farm crops for 1973 was estimated by extension officials at $38,861,672.

At one time, Irish potatoes constituted a sizable cash crop in this county, but their importance has dwindled until no statistics are carried for Martin, although they are still produced in commercial quantities in several other counties in the section. There was a substantial acreage devoted to the crop in 1905. One mercantile firm, J. H. Roberson & Company of Robersonville, sold 15 carloads of barreled potatoes up to May 5 that year. The market was depressed at the time, however, one farmer shipping nine barrels to New York, for which he received $1.83. Another shipped the same number of barrels and was billed $1.99 by the commission firm for the difference between what the potatoes brought and the freight on them.

The late Ben R. Jenkins, farmer in the Robersonville section, planted four acres of Irish potatoes back in 1895, on the recommendation of a friend from Virginia. Very little is known about the methods of cultivating that first crop, or its success, but some 50 years later one of Mr. Jenkins' nephews recalled assisting in the harvest of the potato crop when he was about 12 years old. "We went after the potatoes with our hands," he said, "and immediately packed them in barrels. When a barrel was filled, we would cover it with vines or sacks."

The Irish potato made a comeback in the 1920's in this county. There was a good-sized crop in 1921, according to the Williamston newspaper on May 26, 1921. One farmer had 30 acres and had some of edible size before the middle of May. Price prospects were not very encouraging then, the newspaper said. Fertilizer was selling for $25 to $30 per ton at the time. The return was largely dependent on how early the potatoes could be readied for market. Those with early crops received very good prices in the middle and late twenties, while those with later crops could hardly sell them. Many carload lots were shipped from the county in those years. County farmers still plant some Irish potatos, but they are mostly in gardens for family use.

While not a major crop, sweet potatoes brought in over $100,000 to Martin County farmers in 1973, according to extension officials. The report showed 160 acres were harvested, averaging 290 bushels per acre, for a total production of 47,200 bushels worth $2.95 per bushel, total value being $100,800. Acreage to sweet potatoes for market has never been too large in the county, but the yield has always been good, and a good many farmers grow and cure them for sale to local markets and individuals.

Struggling to survive, county farmers employed every possible idea or means during the Depression period. W. W. Griffin was among the first to build a sweet potato curing house in the county, and he produced fine yams on his farm in Williams Township during the early thirties. In June, 1930, two new curing barns were built, one by H. U. Peel in Bear Grass Township, the other by Will T. Taylor in Robersonville Township, while the firm of Taylor & Wynne made ready a 5,000-bushel capacity curing house in Everetts. Other early curing houses were located on the Micajah Perry farm in Williams Township and the Don G. Matthews place in Poplar Point. There were at least 16 curing barns in operation in the county during 1930, and James G. Staton provided curing facilities in two units of the old storage house located on the railroad in Williamston.

Sweet potato production dropped off in the middle thirties but revived again briefly during the latter part of the decade. A report in 1939 said market conditions in Williamston showed renewed life when, intense competition developed and a stronger demand became evident. Quotations were said to have ranged as high as 95 cents a bushel in wholesale lots, with an estimated 21,000 bushels moving from the county by truck. About 75 per cent of the previous crop had been sold up to that time. Corbett Packing Company, after being off the market for several weeks, returned and planned to ship several carloads within a few days. Commenting on the return, Frank Weaver, a Williamston farmer, was quoted as saying, "I sold a quantity of potatoes to truckers for 57½ cents a bushel without the basket. I have been offered 95 cents a bushel with the basket for the remainder of my crop. Figure the difference, allowing about 13 cents for each basket."

There was a brief revival of interest in sweet potato production after the Martindale plant was built in Williamston and opened for business in September, 1957. However, the interest lagged shortly afterwards, and many of the sweet potatoes processed there were bought in surrounding counties within the next year or two. Relatively few sweet potatoes have been grown commercially in recent years, and most of them are sold at retail on a local basis.

During the two hundred years of Martin County history, a number of its citizens have embarked on various projects to develop new products in their efforts to broaden the base of the economy of the section. Some of the projects were visionary, others more or less pracatical but allowed to lapse due to changing conditions with the passage of time. One of the more unusual ventures was an attempt to develop silkworm culture by Cushing B. Hassell, as noted in his diary in 1836. He purchased 26 acres of land near his home, known as the "Yellowley Field," and started a "cocoonery" on it. The silk boom peaked about 1839 and was on its way out in 1840-41, Hassell losing about $500 on the venture.

William Alfred Burroughs, who was born in 1827 and died in 1899, attempted to begin the culture of rice in Martin County soon after the Civil War on a farm now owned by a grandson, Henry B. Allen. There is no record of how long he was engaged in the attempt, but evidently it did not pay off, since no further mention of it exists.

The first mention of "truck farming" in the county is contained in a report by Peter R. Rives—who farmed about three miles south of Hamilton on the Williamston road—that he delivered 50 large heads of cabbage to Slade, Rhodes & Company, a Hamilton firm, on July 17, 1890. He explained that he had a quantity of fine quality tomatoes for sale also, but there was no market for them at the time.

Although limited in production, honey figured as important income for some Martin County farmers back in 1901. Writing in the Williamston Enterprise on July 12, that year, the Hamilton correspondent said the largest amount of comb honey ever to move out of the county was shipped by S. D. Matthews that week. It consisted of 135 cases, weighing 3,240 pounds, and represented about one-fourth of his entire crop. It was shipped by a Norfolk Southern Railroad Company boat from Hamilton. The report also stated that Mr. Matthews lost about 50 pounds of honey the preceding week, when the honeycomb melted.

Just a few weeks before that, on June 24, 1901, a letter to the editor in the same newspaper from George P. Godard of Williamston told of his experience in producing honey for sale. The letter follows: "To the Editor: I wish to give your readers my experience in raising bees on a small scale. I bought three hives of bees last winter for $3; I have since purchased three A.I. Root hives, which cost $15. I have taken from these three hives by the first of June, 224 pounds of honey worth 10 cents per pound, total, $22.40; a little calculation from the above will prove there is good money in bee raising.

"The hives have been attended to by my little boy, not yet 8 years old, and so well do they understand each other that he will sit by their hives when at work and the bees will crawl over his face and hands, and he has never gotten a sting. I shall double my efforts in raising honey for sale and will report my luck at another date."

Martin County, at one time, produced grapes in large quantities. In September, 1908, A. S. Everett of this county went to Clemson College, S.C., for a short course in grape culture methods. Each season solid carloads of the scuppernong variety were shipped from this section to the winemakers. Grapes constituted a fairly sizable money crop at one time, but the demand for the most part declined when national prohibition came into the picture. One of the large wine manufacturers maintained a buying station in Williamston for a time after prohibition was repealed, but there has been no regular market for grapes in recent years. Pecans are another sideline crop for which a buying station has been maintained in the county. Although no great amount of pecans are produced commercially, the market does provide a means for disposing of any surplus above those required for home use.

Production of livestock for market was on the negligible side in Martin County until well into the present century. Every farm had some cattle, hogs and poultry for home consumption in the early days, but it was not until improved methods of transportation became available and the boll weevil began playing havoc with the cotton crop that much attention was paid to development of livestock production. One sign of the "old west" was reported on June 26, 1901, a newspaper at that time stating that a "Mr. Gooderage, a cow buyer, was driving cattle through Hassell" that day. The number of cattle and destination were not mentioned in the article.

That there were some dairy cattle in Martin County in 1925 is shown by the fact that Dr. A. A. Husman, of the U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry, came to the county in February of that year to make preparations for the tuberculin testing of all milk cows in the county. However, county records show that only 611 milk cows were listed for taxation a few years later, in 1930. They were valued at a total of $25,185, or an average of $41 per head.

An announced proposal to locate a huge cattle ranch on the old Dymond City property in the southeastern part of the county back in June, 1931, turned out to be little more than a land speculation venture. Used mostly by bears as a retreat for many years, the old so-called "J. & W. Tract" of an estimated 15,000 acres of more or less swampy land was purchased by H. A. Vogel and L. A. Thompson—the latter reportedly a malted-milk magnate and cattleman of Wisconsin—in June, 1931. They were said to have paid little more than the delinquent taxes for the property. A small dwelling was built and some cattle were released on the tract, but the ranch operations never amounted to very much, as far as could be learned. The timber rights and land were sold later, the Thompson-Vogel combination and their successors making a substantial profit on the deal. The vast acreage still later was purchased by the Weyerhaeuser Company, and an extensive reclamation project was launched. By 1974, the bears were just about gone, the entire area had been well drained, and planted pine forests were being developed. Fire lanes and access roads criss-crossed the entire area.

As late as 1929, there were only 1,326 head of cattle of all kinds in Martin County, valued at a total of $61,920; some 561 head of these were listed as dairy cattle. The same year the swine population was 17,546, valued at $169,143, and all the poultry in the county was worth only $52,359, most of that being in small farm flocks.

Starting about 1930, the number of livestock in the county began to increase, although the Depression years prevented any substantial gain in value. By 1936 there were 3,200 head of all types of cattle. Cattle then remained somewhere around that total for some 18 years, the cattle population climbing to 5,270 in 1954, including a record high of 1,140 dairy cows. The number of beef cattle started a fairly steady, gradual increase about that time, while the number of dairy cattle gradually declined after 1957. In 1967, the total number of cattle in the county was up to 7,550, only 350 of which were dairy cows; and then there was a decline for several years before the total jumped suddenly to an all-time high of 7,700 in 1971, of which 218 were cows retained for milking purposes, the milk being used mostly on the home farms. In 1973, the office of the extension service estimated that some 5,100 head of beef cattle were sold for slaughter, bringing a net $1,076,500 to the producers. This was a record high in value, although the actual number sold for slaughter was somewhat smaller than in the preceding year.

Martin County has always sold a substantial number of hogs, many of them through local markets for home consumption; but in the middle twenties the number of swine being produced began to show a more or less steady increase. There were some fluctuations, but the 17,546 swine sold in 1929 gradually increased to 40,650 in 1960. In the five following years, the price declined and so did production, dropping to 31,150 in 1965. Then production started to increase, reaching 58,600 in 1969 and hitting a record high of 68,000 in 1973, the value also being a new record high of $4,180,000.

Poultry is another field that has had its ups and downs over comparatively recent years in this county. There is no accurate record of early sales of the various types of poultry; and prior to 1926, when the first carload of poultry was shipped on a cooperative basis, most of the chickenand egg sales were on a barter basis at general stores for items not produced on the farms.

County Farm Agent T. B. Brandon arranged for the first cooperative loading of a poultry car in the county on March 23, 1926, releasing a sizable amount of cash to the farmers who brought chickens, ducks, and turkeys to the market. For the next half dozen years or more, about six carloads of poultry were shipped each year to Philadelphia and other northern markets on a cooperative basis. Some of the cars were loaded in the upper part of the county after the successful initial loadings at Jamesville and Williamston. Prices were considered quite high at the time, as follows: Hens 24½ cents per pound; cocks, 12 cents; broilers, 45 cents; ducks, 20 cents, geese, 15 cents; and guineas, 25 cents each.

Some of the cooperative car loadings in Jamesville, Williamston, Robersonville, and Oak City released between $4,000 and $5,000 monthly in Martin County during the Depression years. In 1931, loadings were started in January and continued through several subsequent months. Coming at a time when most field crops were bringing starvation prices, the cash received was a tremendous boost to the economy of the county.

As a side note to the production of livestock, one of the most controversial subjects in the history of the county developed as an outgrowth of the attempt to eliminate the cattle tick. The Martin County Board of Commissioners, at its January meeting of 1917, appropriated $500 to begin a program of cattle dipping to eliminate the ticks, with additional appropriations to be made "from time to time as needed . . . not to exceed a total sum of $4,000." By May, 1917, three vats had been built and a fourth one was being constructed on the farm of James J. Roberson in the Farm Life section of Griffins Township, under the supervision of Dr. Joseph S. O'Hara. Fourteen vats were completed by the middle of December and plans were being made for others, possibly as many as 40.

During that first year, more than 500 head of cattle were dipped, with an estimated 2,000 others awaiting their turn at the vats. The dipping process reached its peak in July, 1919, a record number of cattle having taken the plunge by that time. The entire tick eradication program was bitterly opposed by many farmers, who considered the dipping program worthless and a nuisance. Several vats were blown up by dynamite. In one instance, the dynamite to blow up a vat in Poplar Point Township was wrapped in a copy of the Williamston Enterprise, which was left at the scene with the label bearing the subscriber's name, leading to his arrest.

FAIRS IMPORTANT IN EARLIER DAYS

Improved methods of farming were transmitted through agricultural fairs held in Martin County during the middle 1800's and later. The fairs were sponsored by agricultural societies both on the county and local level and mention of them is to be found in newspaper articles and notes in individual diaries. First mention of an agricultural society is contained in an old newspaper account stating that a meeting of the Martin County Agricultural Society was held in Williamston on August 25, 1854. The item also says, "It is believed that good influence will be felt by the farmers in the county from this society." Elder C. B. Hassell also made an entry in his diary on August 25, 1854, about the meeting, reading as follows: "A meeting in Williamston this day of the Agricultural Society of Martin County. Eleven new members added, making about 50 in all." Elder Hassell noted under the date of November 2, 1854, "Agricultural fair at Hamilton this day. (Hassell) did not attend, but understand it went off well."

The following year, on November 1, 1855, Elder Hassell noted that he, his wife, and daughter Lavinia, "went to the agricultural fair at Hamilton. Bro. Asa Biggs delivered the address. It was pretty largely attended and the articles tolerable, for Martin County. It was to be continued two days." The fair at Hamilton evidently was held annually in early November, as Elder Hassell had the following notation under the date of November 5, 1857: "Also went to the river early in the morning about 7 o'clock to see the arrival of the steamer 'Styles', bound to the agricultural fair at Hamilton. Some passengers had been taken on board at Plymouth, some at Jamesville, but a great many got on board at Williamston." On November 1, 1860, he wrote " . . . also went to landing to see the 'John Styles' steamer. Quite a number going up from Plymouth and Williamston to the agricultural fair at Hamilton. This fair is held annually and holds two days. It had been diminishing in interest and was not so well attended as formerly. The members of the Baptist Church had withdrawn from it—and it was becoming more of a horse show and horse race than an agricultural fair."

After the brief flurry of agricultural fairs around the middle of the nineteenth century, the next one of record came on October 24, 1917, when the first Martin County Community Fair was held in Goose Nest Township at Oak City High School. Said to have been very successful, all kinds of farm products, food, antiques, and like items were exhibited. F. M. Harrell was president of the fair and he was assisted in making arrangements for the exhibits by Joseph L. Holliday, county farm agent at the time.

Among the rare items displayed were two clocks—owned by Mrs. A. Burnett—which had been brought from Holland more than 250 years previously by a man who was alleged to have opened the dikes to drown an invading army. Mrs. Burnett also displayed a pincushion made in Holland in 1585, and Miss Hattie Everett exhibited a silk quilt made by her grandmother about 150 years earlier. Group singing was an entertainment feature and brief addresses were made by A. J. Manning, Sr., county school superintendent; W. C. Manning, Sr., county food administrator during World War I; and Mr. Holliday, the farm demonstration agent.

Two community agricultural fairs were held in the county during the month of October, 1919. Robersonville held its first community fair early in the month, but few details are available other than that it was held in the Adkins & Bailey Warehouse and R. E. Grimes sales stables and was very successful.

Williamston held its first community agricultural fair on October 15, 1919. Dr. J. S. Rhodes was president and Dr. John D. Biggs was secretary of the sponsoring organization, which raised about $1,000 from Williamston business firms for premiums. The event was said to have been very successful, livestock exhibits being especially good. County farm and home demonstration agents, Joseph L. Holliday and Miss Esther Gluyas, cooperated in making arrangements, placing and judging the exhibits. Subscriptions totaling $25,000 were received for promotion of a county-wide fair to be held in the future for the promotion of agriculture and industry.

Early in January, 1920, the Martin County Fair Association was organized in Williamston, and plans were made to hold the first fair in September of that year. Forty acres of land were purchased from Mrs. Wheeler Martin, the location then being a mile west of Williamston but now inside the city limits, in the section known as "West End." An impressive setting was arranged for the first fair, held that year on October 5, 6, 7, and 8. Prior to the opening, work was completed on the grounds, a half-mile race track having been constructed, along with a grandstand which would seat 2,500, a main exhibit hall of 12,800 square feet, the ladies' building, livestock building, poultry building, machinery shed, 75 stables for race horses, judges' stand, and free-acts pavilion, as well as a sizable parking area and midway layout. The fair was largely attended and generally considered one of the best and most successful county or district fairs on the circuit.

The fair was operated strictly as a county fair for two years, then was reorganized on a district basis and renamed the Roanoke Fair. It continued in that manner for a number of years, finally experiencing financial difficulties that caused its discontinuance. In its hey-day, the event was considered a leader throughout the state, the livestock show—under the direction of D. M. Roberson—and the poultry show—under the supervision of C. W. Jacks of Rocky Mount—being outstanding and generally recognized as on a par with those departments at the North Carolina State Fair. Efforts were made in later years to revive the fair, by civic clubs and other groups, but none was able to regain for the event the prestige and respect it formerly had.

A number of county civic clubs in 1943 launched a movement to hold an annual junior livestock show and sale in order to promote interest among young farm people in the production of livestock. This project was proposed by L. L. McLendon, who was an assistant farm agent at that time, and it had the cooperation of county agricultural teachers and extension agents. The program proved a success from the beginning and was participated in by 4-H Club and FFA members throughout the county.

The show-sales continued for 27 years until 1970, when, due to a combination of circumstances, the program was finally abandoned. Approximately 300 prize steers and thousands of hogs were sold at a good profit during the 27-year period. The event brought boys and girls together from all parts of the county and also meant financial gain to many of them. On several occasions the annual picnic meeting of the Martin County Farm Bureau was held in connection with the junior livestock show and sale, bringing farmers together from all sections of the county.

Among the first organized movements to improve agriculture in the county were those in the early part of this century to secure specialists in various fields to meet with farmers and outline improved methods that had been developed. One such meeting was held on January 16, 1906, to discuss stock raising and the cultivation and marketing of crops. Troubled at that time by low prices for the 1905 peanut crop, the farmers at the meeting also talked about the possibility of organizing a cooperative peanut growers' association. A farmers' institute was held in

Williamston on December 12, 1906, but no details are available about the sessions.

An institute for farmers and farm women was held in Williamston on January 30, 1909. The U. S. Department of Agriculture sent three specialists to the farmers' meeting to discuss improved methods for cultivation of various crops. That afternoon, Mrs. Sue Hollowell, assisted by F. L. Stevens, discussed many things of interest to farm women. At a joint meeting later, Mrs. Hollowell told the men of the obligations they owed to other members of the family. Prizes of $1 were offered for the best ear of corn and best loaf of bread, names of the winners not being recorded.

Three phases of farming were discussed by specialists at an institute held in Williamston on February 2, 1910. Dr. W. G. Crisman talked about cattle raising, stating among other things that the cattle tick was costing southern farmers millions of dollars annually. His remarks led the later movement for dipping cattle to eliminate the ticks which created resentment among the farmers. W. H. Hutt, a second speaker, discussed the San Jose scale and other diseases of trees, suggesting a formula for dealing with the insects that caused the scale. He also proposed control methods for the potato bug, root louse on cotton, mosquitoes, and house flies. Franklin Sherman reviewed the latest developments in the cultivation of cotton and tobacco and recommended nitrate of soda to stimulate growth in stunted cotton stalks. Special attention was also devoted to proper seed selection in all crops.

The nation's agriculture was issued its biggest challenge soon after World War I was declared in early April, 1917. By May 11 that year, Martin County had set up a county board of agriculture, including all members of the board of county commissioners, register of deeds, school superintendent, and the farm agent. The board was charged with the duty of stimulating food production and conservation. John L. Hassell was named chairman of the county board and County Agent Joseph L. Holliday was secretary. To assist in meeting the challenge, the following were appointed township representatives:

Jamesville: Mrs. W. T. Coburn, J. A. Getsinger, W. W. Walters, Lawrence Ange, R. G. Sexton, G. T. Mizelle; Williams: Perlie Manning, W. W. Griffin, S. E. Hardison; Griffins: J. L. Coltrain, N. R. Manning, H. T. Roberson, Plenny Peel, L. H. Peel; Bear Grass: W. A. Perry; A. W. Bailey, G. R. Terry, Henry Peel, H. U. Peel;

Williamston: A. Anderson, R. G. Harrison, C. H. Godwin, James D. Bowen, McG. Peel, J. L. Oakley;

Cross Roads: Fernanda Wynn, J. A. Ausbon, J. L. Wynn; Robersonville: S. T. Everett, Augustus Williams, W. H. Green, H. T. Brown, J. Henry Roberson, L. L. Roberson; Poplar Point: Don Johnson, J. A. Leggett; Hamilton: Moye P. Taylor, Harry Walo, R. W. Salsbury; Goose Nest: T. H. Johnson, W. J. Johnson, J. A. Everett, C. L. Turner.

Accepting the challenge to improve and preserve the food supply during World War I, the colored population, under the insistence and direction of W. Tom Alexander. respected Williamston barber and teacher, organized a canning club June 5, 1917. shortly after the war began. In a talk at the organization meeting, Alexander made it plain that "it is not only conducive but absolutely necessary to our comfort and well-being that we get busy and do something ourselves...."

The status of farming operations in the county for the crop year 1923 is reflected in a report issued by the North Carolina Tax Commission in 1924 which showed 79,322 acres in cultivation, 31,302 by owners and 48,020 by tenants. At that time the acreage being cultivated by tenants was on the increase, 60 per cent of the land being "tended" by 2,096 tenants. This trend has been reversed in recent years and the number of tenants has declined, with a great deal of the cropland being operated under leases. In 1923, in addition to the 79,322 acres being cultivted, there wre 742 acres in improved pastures, 2,723 idle acres, and 147,460 acres of woodland. Crops included 23,111 acres of corn, 19,564 acres cotton, 18,710 acres peanuts, 12,449 acres tobacco, 2,755 acres hay of all kinds, 1,380 acres sweet potatoes, 1,260 acres oats, 447 acres soybeans, 383 acres Irish potatoes, 63 acres cowpeas, 35 acres wheat, and 3 acres of rye for grain. There were 63,668 hens, 5,393 mules, and 159 sheep on farms that year, as well as 2,525 fruit trees. It was estimated that 22,449 tons of fertilizer were used. Although the total value of all farm products was not given, it was stated that the per capita income from the farm was about 5C cents per day.

"Live at Home" was the theme of a state-wide farm program sponsored by Governor O. Max Gardner shortly after his term began in 1929. The program was endorsed and advocated by farm specialists, extension workers and various farm organizations and received much attention in this as well as surrounding counties. Following the market crash the Williamston newspaper said, commenting on the program, "Farmers and just about everyone else not only lived at home but also remained at home throughout most of the Depression years that followed."

A survey made in February, 1930, revealed that the "Live at Home Program" was failing to measure up to even minimum standards in early 1930. It was along about the time that Martin farmers were said to be raising more hogs per acre of land in cultivation than any other county in the nation. However, even then, the county had a food-feed deficiency estimated at $1,282,675, not including a deficiency of $686,851 on the farms themselves. To meet even minimum efficiency standards, it was stated that the county would have to produce 483,000 more bushels of corn, 136,000 more bushels of oats, 7,792 more tons of hay, a million more pounds of beef, two and a quarter million more gallons of milk, 100,000 more pounds of poultry, and 175,000 more dozens of eggs.

Similar conditions prevailed through the next year, another survey in January, 1931, showing that despite the live-at-home promotion, the county was still falling considerably short. In a farm outlook meeting held in the courthouse, a few farmers were told that the county was short 20 per cent of the corn needed to supply its own needs, 73 per cent of oats, 89 per cent of milk, 66 per cent of poultry, and 33 per cent of the eggs needed. The county was "long" on money crops at that time, but they were selling at ridiculously low prices. Peanuts, for instance, at one time during that period, were bringing one cent per pound when a buyer could be found.

A complete soil survey of Martin County was made by the federal and state departments of agriculture in the late twenties and early thirties of this century. The work was done by S. O. Perkins, of the federal department, in cooperation with S. R. Bacon, of the state department. It was started in January, 1927, completed and published in booklet form with a folding map in the latter part of 1931, and released in January, 1932. The report listed 22 different soils as present in the county, in addition to swamp and meadow land. They were shown on the map, with a different color designation for each type of soil.

Norfolk fine sandy loam was described as the most extensive and important soil in the county, capable of producing from 700 to 1,200 pounds of tobacco per acre when well fertilized, one-half to a bale of cotton, 100 to 400 bushels of sweet potatoes, and about 1½ tons of peanut hay. All of these figures have been surpassed in recent years by actual production records. Lenoir very fine sandy loam is another extensive soil of the county and quite capable of producing good yields, although all types require proper fertilization and additional organic matter. Similar important soils of the county described in the report include the Dunbar, Ruston, Onslow, and Wickham series. There are few copies of the rpeort available now, although The Enterprise in Williamston has several and others may be found at the courthouse and in some of the libraries. The first planned tests to evaluate soils and fertilizers for tobacco were conducted about the time the survey was made. Three tests were made in 1927, and much valuable information was gained.

During the early days of Martin County, most of the farm crops were moved to major markets and manufacturing centers by boat. Later the railroads took over the bulk of the task, although water transportation continued to be an important factor through the first third of the present century. Records from other parts of the county are not available, but a report filed on January 17, 1928, shows that farm commodities of the 1927 crop year valued at $2,734,000 were shipped by rail alone from Williamston. This included 390 carloads of tobacco, 256 carloads of peanuts, and 4,000 bales of cotton. At that time the Norfolk, Baltimore & Carolina Boat Line was still operating regular schedules from Williamston to Norfolk, and it carried a tremendous volume of farm produce from the county. During the July-December period of 1928, it was estimated that it would have taken a train six miles long to move the 1928 farm products shipped from Williamston alone by boat and rail. Since the construction of good roads throughout the area, trucks have moved in and now handle virtually all of that traffic.

The plight of agriculture during the Depression year of 1931 is brought into perspective in a newspaper report dated January 1, 1931. Realizing that many of its subscribers were in dire financial straits at that time, the Williamston Enterprise the preceding fall had offered a year's subscription for a bag of peanuts, usually weighing around 100 pounds. Peanuts in 1931 had sold for as low as 90 cents a hundred pounds, and the newspaper received more than 200 bags of peanuts under the barter program. In its first edition of 1932, the editor explained that the entire newspaper force was starting out the new year full of hope and peanuts.

In December, 1935, the Resettlement Administration, a relatively new federal agency, announced plans to enable deserving farmers unable to secure credit elsewhere to obtain loans for producing crops in the year 1936. David Modlin was director of the service for this district, and the county committee was composed of H. S. Everett, T. B. Slade, T. B. Brandon, H. H. Cowen, S. H. Grimes, and Miss Lora E. Sleeper. Local committees were composed of the following: Oak City: J. W. Hines, J. C. Ross, W. T. Daniel; Hamilton: D. G. Matthews, Jesse Everett, J. H. Davenport; Jamesville: J. E. Hedrick, Clarence Sexton, Charles Davenport; Williamston: Tom Harris, L. P. Lindsley.

The crop loans were to be made for 5 per cent interest. They would enable recipients to purchase subsistence, seed, fertilizer, tools, work animals, and other items needed to produce a crop. Farmers eligible to participate in the loan fund were urged to make arrangements immediately for the new crop year. The program continued for several years and was a great boon to many farmers.

In March, 1936, announcement was made of the inauguration of the soil conservation program in this county. Instituted by the federal government, this program exerted a tremendous influence on agriculture in this section in succeeding years. A number of speakers came into the county from the state extension service to explain details to the farmers. Payments were made to farmers for carrying out approved practices in building up fertility of the soil on their farms, thus providing a double benefit that has had much to do with increasing the value of farmland in the county. The program has been greatly expanded and broadened since it began in 1936 and now provides a great deal of technical advice in long-range planning for improvement of land throughout the entire section.

Another organization that has had considerable influence on farming in Martin County is the American Farm Bureau Federation. Plans for organizing a county unit were first considered at a meeting of farmers in the county courthouse in Williamston on February 24, 1936. A Mr. Holstun, representative of the Alabama Farm Bureau, attended and urged farmers to join in the membership campaign then underway throughout eastern North Carolina. The county unit was perfected at a meeting Friday, July 3, with the election of officers. H. S. Everett of Robersonville was named president, J. F. Crisp of Oak City, vice president; Murphy Barnes, secretary and treasurer; F. C. Stallings of Jamesville and L. A. Clark of Everetts, members of the executive committee. The bureau then had about 1,000 members.

Some of the greatest and most beneficial improvements to agricultural life in Martin County during the twentieth century have been those influenced by the extension service through farm and home demonstration agents. Not only have they shown how to produce more and better crops and expand livestock production in all phases through improved methods, but they also have taught farmers and their wives to build and furnish their homes for more convenience, utility, and beauty, and to use their free time for relaxation and enjoyment of the cultural advantages and social life in rural areas.

T. D. Leggett was the first county farm agent in the county. Appointed in 1909, he served for about a year, and was succeeded by S. E. Hardison, who continued in the position through 1911. It is thought they served more or less on a part-time basis, continuing their personal farming operations but conducting demonstrations in various approved practices and serving as advisors to those who came to them for information. There is a record of a boys' corn club being in existence in 1910, according to a newspaper report that year, and it is presumed this was organized or sponsored by the farm agent at that time.

The Smith-Lever Act was passed by the United States Congress in 1914, making farm demonstration work a permanent function of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with state agriculture departments and local county governments. Martin County commissioners took their first steps to institute the work on a full-time basis in this county on June 7, 1915, when they appropriated $600 for this purpose, to be matched by $600 from the federal department. The commissioners then proceeded to march up and down the hill several times, rescinding the action at their next meeting in July, and reinstating it at their August meeting after a number of petitions from county farmers favoring the work that had been presented to him.

Joseph L. Holliday was appointed and really became the first county farm agent to enter upon the work as it is known today. Mr. Holliday then went to A. & M. College in Raleigh to take several short courses before beginning actual work. In October he issued his first broad recommendation, urging farmers in all areas to plant cover crops that fall. Rye, oats, and wheat were suggested, the agent stating that adoption of the practice would result in a big saving on fertilizer bills the succeeding spring.

Mr. Holliday continued as farm demonstration agent from August, 1915, until July 1, 1921, when the work was discontinued because of economic conditions. It was a difficult period, covering as it did not only World War I but the "boom-bust" years that preceded and followed it. Each time the county board would meet and funds were short, as they usually were, the first proposal for retrenchment would be in the field of farm demonstration, and the work was continued almost on a month-to-month basis at times during the six years Mr. Holliday continued in the job. Despite his difficulties in an entirely new field, Mr. Holliday laid the groundwork for the successful programs that were to follow in later years. After the work was discontinued at the end of the fiscal year in 1921, the county was without a county agent until February 1, 1924.

No history of agriculture in Martin County would be complete without mention of T. B. or "Tom" Brandon. A native of South Carolina, he graduated from Clemson College in 1917, was county agent in Claxton, Ga., for two years, then at St. George, S.C., for three yeras before coming to North Carolina in 1923 as Greene County agent at Snow Hill. He remained there for ten months prior to taking up the work in this county on February 1, 1924. From that time until his retirement on June 30, 1957, his career and the development of agricultural extension work in Martin County were exactly parallel for a period of 33 years and five months.

At the time Mr. Brandon came to the county, the boll weevil was destroying cotton as the chief money crop, and farmers were interested in developing income from other sources, such as cattle, hogs, poultry, truck and vegetables, as well as improving methods for producing and marketing other crops. The work having been at a standstill for nearly three years, the new agent was forced to start almost from scratch. He immediately launched demonstrations on growing corn, cotton, tobacco, and peanuts, and began organizing pig and corn club work among the young people. One of his main jobs, however, was vaccinating swine against cholera, and in that connection he handled pigs and hogs by the tens of thousands in succeeding years without charge to producers except for the actual cost of the vaccine used.

Both Mr. Holliday and Mr. Brandon had some help in demonstration work from Oliver Carter, designated an assistant agent for work among colored people. He lived in Parmele and was employed on a part-time basis, being paid a nominal salary of about $25 a month during the entire period of his service from

1912 until 1927. He was said to have done a very effective job among his people with the funds available to him.

Mr. Brandon continued to operate the county office in Williamston on a one-man basis through thick and thin, voluntarily accepting a salary cut at one time during the Depression. He worked very closely with farmers in the county on a personal basis during the early years, but as the farm program became more complex, with the addition of crop controls and marketing quotas, additional people were required, and Mr. Brandon's duties became largely administrative in later years. The work of his office was closely allied to that of the home demonstration agents over the years, as well as to the soil conservation program for some time after it came into being.

First assistance for the county agent's office in Williamston was provided in 1933 with the employment of Miss Mary Carstarphen as extension secretary. She continued in that position through the early part of 1974, retiring about the middle of the year after some 41 years of efficient and accommodating service, a tenure exceeding even that of Mr. Brandon's record of more than 33 years.

D. W. Brady has the second longest period of service as a Martin County farm agent, coming here in 1946 after getting out of the army at the close of World War II. A native of Moore County, he graduated from N. C. State University in 1942 and went into the service immediately, rising to the rank of captain. He came here as assistant agent, his work being centered on livestock, and his efforts had a decided influence on the expansion of cattle and hog production in the area. He remained in the extension service in the county until his retirement on June 30, 1973, after 27 years. He had been promoted to chairman of the county extension service after Mr. Brandon's retirement in 1957, serving six years in that capacity.

R. McK. Edwards, who came to the county as an assistant agent in July, 1946, moved up to acting chairman of the county extension service after Mr. Brady's retirement in 1973, rounding out 28 years with the department in 1974.

A large number of assistant agents have served in the Martin County office since Murphy L. Barnes became the first one in 1934. They are no longer called assistant agents, but agricultural extension agents with specialists in various fields of work. Some of them have remained for years, others only a few months, generally leaving due to promotions or for better-paying jobs in their specialties. Mr. Barnes devoted much of hit time to organizing 4-H club work and remained in the county until 1937.

Lloyd T. Weeks succeeded Mr. Barnes in 1937, but remained only a few months. He later became executive head of the Tobacco Stabilization Corporation, a governmental agency which bought tobacco sold below support-price levels under the tobacco control program. J. P. Woodard was in the county from 1937 to 1939; L. L. McLendon was here in 1942 and 1943, being instrumental in inaugurating the first fat stock show and sale in 1943, a project which continued on an annual basis for 27 years, until 1970.

J. I. Eagles succeeded McLendon in 1943 and was here through 1944, C. J. Goodman following in 1945 and 1946. D. W. Brady and R. McK. Edwards both arrived in 1946, Mr. Brady continuing until his retirement in 1973, while Mr. Edwards continued as senior officer in farm extension work through 1974. Woody Cone also came to the county in 1946 as an assistant, but was here for only a short time. The other member of the current farm extension staff in Martin County is P. C. Bryant, former vocational agriculture teacher in Williamston High School, who started with the county office in 1966. Mr. Bryant has been active in promoting increased peanut production in recent years, Martin County farmers under his leadership taking dominant positions for several seasons in the Two-Ton and 5,000-Pound Clubs sponsored by the peanut growers' association.

Other farm extension agents who have been in and out of the work in this county in relatively recent years include the following:

J. W. Sumner, from 1947 to 1951; Sam A. Tooten, 1950 to 1952; D. L. Simmons, 1953 and 1954; Larry L. Hodges, 1953 to 1965; C. D. Hodges, 1954 and 1955; Fred Tatum, 1955 to 1957; Douglas Eason, 1957 to 1961; F. P. McNair, 1959 to 1961; W. G. Barnes, 1961 and 1962; Roger Bunch, 1962 and 1963; Sutton Austin, 1962 and 1963; J. W. Weaver, 1963 to 1966; Frank Eason, 1967 to 1970; David Brown, 1970 to 1973; and Tim Forest, a trainee, who was here for a few months in 1970.

Home Demonstration work, or Home Economics Extension work as it is now called, received its start in Martin County back in the days of World War I, when Mrs. Esther McC. Gluyas came here to help organize canning clubs among women and girls in the county as part of the food conservation program designed to aid in the war effort. She remained until 1921, when the program was allowed to die out, along with farm demonstration work. The county restored the farm program in February, 1924, but it was over two years later before any attempt was made to resume home demonstration activities.

In May, 1926, delegations of women from the Robersonville, Parmele and Jamesville areas, along with representatives of the women's clubs in Robersonville, appeared before the board of county commissioners and appealed for restoration of the program. The commissioners appropriated $900 to launch the work and with matching funds from the state and federal departments of agriculture, this was sufficient to secure the service of Miss Anna Trentham, who arrived to enter upon her duties in July, 1926. She was to work directly under the supervision of the district agent, Miss Pauline Smith of Washington. Miss Trentham came to the county from Tennessee and was given temporary office space in the grand jury room at the courthouse until arrangements could be made for a permanent office elsewhere. She organized a number of home demonstration clubs in the county before resigning in the fall of 1927.

Miss Lora E. Sleeper, a native of New England who did graduate work at Harvard and had been supervisor of household management at an Atlanta, Ga., high school prior to coming here, was employed to replace Miss Trentham in January, 1928. She was active in promoting 4-H club work, and in the home demonstration clubs through 1939 and succeeded in putting the entire program on a firm foundation in the county. Several times during the Depression years of the early thirties there was talk of discontinuing the work, but each time members of the home demonstration clubs, under the leadership of Miss Sleeper, would mass representatives and move in on the county commissioners and effectively disabuse them of such an idea. During the latter part of her stay here, Mrs. Cleopatra Tyner joined the staff and launched club work among colored people of the county, remaining for a number of years.

Miss Mildred Pigg was home demonstration agent through the war years, from 1940 to 1945, carrying on and expanding the work started by her predecessors. Several assistant agents also served during her tenure, their work being largely with 4-H club activities. Two of these were Miss Marguerite Ricks in 1944 and Miss Marguerite Pierce in 1945.

Miss Elizabeth Parker followed Miss Pigg as home agent for the 10-year period, 1946-1956. She married a native of the section, Thad Harrison, and continued to reside in the county after leaving the extension service in 1956. Among the assistants who served with her during the 10-year span were Miss Garnette Crocker, Miss Agnes Beal, Miss Ruby Lee Spencer, Miss Peggy Lordan, and Miss Emma Lou Chappel. Miss Mary Brooks worked with the colored women's home demonstration clubs during this period also.

The present senior agent in home economics extension service work in the county is Mrs. Helen Hoskins, who came to the county in 1957. During her tenure two changes have been made in titles related to the program. Home demosntration agents have become extension home economics agents, and home demonstration clubs have become extension home economics clubs. Two other extension home economics agents are now associated with Mrs. Hoskins in the work, Mrs. Vivian Morris who started April 1, 1963; and Mrs. Ila Holtz Parker, who came here in 1966.

Helping the extension home agents and working with the 4-H clubs since 1957 as assistant agents have been Miss Betsy Smith, Mrs. Irene Johnson, Mrs. Jane McGee Taylor, Mrs. Lois Hall, Miss Elizabeth Wilson, and Mrs. Edith Mallard Cox. Extension secretaries who have served in the county office over the years include Mrs. Jack Bailey and Miss Sarah Wobbleton (1946-1961). Miss Katherine Taylor became secretary in 1962 and served until 1969, and Mrs. Marie W. Roberson has been secretary since then. Mrs. Lou Newsome has been secretary in the office of Mrs. Morris since 1957.

Over the years the number of extension homemaker clubs for women of the county has varied, but has ranged up to a high of 24 in 1968 and stood at 22 in the early part of 1974. The demonstrations and workshops of an earlier era were devoted primarily to studies of basic foods, including nutrition and conservation, clothing, home management, and home beautification. More recently they have added studies and workshops in family living, man-made fabrics, food mixes, use and care of equipment, and like subjects. It has been found necessary to keep up with new discoveries in all areas of homemaking.

After being crowded into various rooms at the courthouse for more than a decade, a movement was launched in 1963 to build a new home for the county farm and home demonstration agents. Application was first made to have an addition built to the courthouse by the WPA for the purpose, but this was turned down and a separate site was secured, a lot just to the west of the courthouse being bought from the heirs of Dr. J. B. H. Knight for the purpose.

Finally, around the first of May, 1936, the WPA approved the project, and work was started shortly afterwards. The county appropriated $3,000 as its part, $1,800 for the lot and $1,200 for the skilled labor needed for the work. The WPA committee allotted $10,000 for the project, and the building was completed and occupied in the spring of 1937. It provided office space for both the county farm and home agents, their assistants and secretaries, and an auditorium for meetings and conferences. The building has since been enlarged considerably and now houses offices for the county school superintendent and his assistants, book storage, and the board of education, as well as farm and home economics extension services.

Despite some major high and low spots—especially around the Civil War period—agriculture in this section had a history of relatively smooth development from the time the county was chartered in 1774 until the Depression years of the early thirties of the present century. At this latter time, many farmers were faced with ruinously low prices for the crops then being produced and lost their land through forced sales to clear mortgages, tax liens and similar encumbrances. Farm relief proposals became one of the principal political issues of the time; and a change in the national administration in 1933 started a chain reaction of complex legislation which has made the federal government probably the most important single factor in farm planning, production and selling methods in the years that have followed.

Passage by the United States Congress of the first Agricultural Adjustment Administration Act—also known as the "Triple-A Act" or "AAA", which became effective May 12, 1933—marked the beginning of the most far-reaching changes in the 159-year history of farming in Martin County up to that time. This act provided benefit payments for farmers who entered into contracts with the Secretary of Agriculture to adjust their production of certain specified commodities. At first the act applied only to three "basic" products—corn, wheat and cotton—and the payments were financed chiefly by processing taxes on the commodities concerned. The "basic" list was later expanded to include other crops, including tobacco and peanuts, two of the main cash crops produced in this county.

The United States Supreme Court, in a decision handed down on January 6, 1936, declared some sections of the 1933 Triple-A Act unconstitutional and voided the processing taxes. The Congress then immediately went to work on substitute price-support legislation; and on February 29, 1936, the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 becmae law. This provided for "soil-conserving" and "soil-building" payments for cooperating farmers for carrying out certain specifically approved practices, including shifting acreage from soil-depleting to soil-conserving crops.

With subsequent amendments and modifications providing for mandatory price supports on certain crops subject to acreage allotments and/or marketing quotas, provisions of this act continue in effect. Acreage allotments and marketing quotas, however, are not permitted to become effective until they are approved by a two-thirds majority in referendums which allow only the eligible producers of the specified crops to vote. Major crops in Martin County which are or have been at one time or another subject to acreage allotments or marketing quotas include tobacco, corn, peanuts and cotton. Additional payments have been and are being made to farmers for complying with certain other conservation conditions, including, in various phases of the program, the construction of farm ponds, drainage improvements, planting soil-building and cover crops, placing land in the "soil bank" or taking it out of production, and carrying out other conservation practices.

It was the influence of the Triple-A Act, with its amendments and modifications, which brought about the great revolution in the agriculture of Martin County. Prior to its adoption, each farmer decided for himself how much acareage he would devote to the various crops, where and how he would market and sell them, and all other determinations about his farming operations. This system broke down completely in the Depression of the early thirties, however, when it became impossible to produce any crops for the prices offered. The government stepped in with its price-support program, making it necessary to have production controls. The quota and allotment systems were adopted by vote of the producers themselves, providig heavy penalties for overproduction or failure to comply with other terms of the program, and requiring precise records of the acreage, production and sales of the commodities affected.

Originally, quotas were based on the history of acreages planted to the various crops on individual farms. Those which had been producing the largest amount of the more profitable cash crops received proportionately larger allotments, and thus they suddenly became more valuable than the farms which had been growing relatively smaller amounts of the principal money crops.

Those who had the money or credit began leasing or buying the farms with the larger crop allotments in order to enlarge and increase the efficiency of their operations. Development of labor-saving machinery and equipment made their farming even more profitable, but entirely too expensive for successful operation of the average small one-family farm, which had been the mainstay of agriculture in Martin County from the very beginning. Some of the smaller operators banded together to purchase equipment for common usage, but the number of smaller farmers continues to diminish with the passing years.

Administration of the Triple-A Act for this area in the beginning was largely handled through the office of the county agent. The work soon became so time-consuming and complex, however, that shortly after the act was adopted in 1933, T. B. Slade of Hamilton was employed to handle its details with Walter Halberstadt of Williamston assisting in compiling the data related to acreage and production of crops by the individual farms.

When some provisions of the Triple-A Act were invalidated by the Supreme Court in January, 1936, the Congress almost immediately adopted another law providing for a new farm program, administration of which was largely delegated to community and county committees elected by the growers themselves and carried out through an independent branch of the Department of Agriculture which is now called the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, or "ASCS". This agency was at first known as the Production and Marketing Administration and was originally headed in Martin County by Mr. Slade, with the title of secretary and chief clerk under the community and county committee system.

Although there have been changes in the name of the agency chiefly responsible for handling the farm program in this county since then, it has had only two administrative heads over the entire period since 1933. Mr. Slade held the office for something over 23 years, until his death in October, 1956. Since that time, J. Sidney Mallory, who was an office employee prior to the death of his predecessor, has been in charge. His title in 1974 was county executive director of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, as the organization is now known.

Occupying a single room in the old courthouse building when the farm program was first set up in 1933, the agency now has a suite on the second floor of the new county office building, located across the street from the courthouse. The number of employees handling the agricultural programs in Martin County ranged from one at the start in 1933 to a high of nine in 1972, since having been reduced by four.

There is a related agency of the ASCS, the Soil Conservation Service, which has offices in the same building. Although entirely independent in its operations, which are concerned chiefly with the technical planning and development of soil-improvement and conservation programs for county farmers, payments for the projects it develops are subject to approval by the ASCS office.

Howard K. McKnight was the first soil conservationist in Martin County, coming to Williamston around 1942, when the office was instituted, and remaining as its head for 21 years. Following his retirement, he was succeeded by Kenneth Futrell, who was manager for about two and a half years. Futrell was followed in 1966 by Walter Smith, who served about eight years until his retirement in 1974, and Howard L. Hobson has been manager of the office since. Willis H. Modlin has been assistant conservationist for about 20 years.

Although they may not be considered as part of the agricultural economy of Martin County, forest products in the section have been connected with farms and farming for so long a time that it is practically impossible to separate them. As a matter of fact, when the county was first settled, the value of wood products was so much greater than that of the fields that it was no contest. Naval stores, comprised of tar, pitch, and turpentine, were the principle items of export for years before and immediately after the county was created. Then, in the early days of the county, when land was being cleared for the tremendous plantations devoted to field crops, shingle and stave mills and saw mills continued to provide employment for much of the total work force.

No figures are available as to the value of forest products in those early days. As the virgin timber was cut out, the industry languished somewhat after the first quarter of the present century. It was revived on a tremendous scale, however, with the location of the large pulp mill in the lower part of this county in

1937, and continues to increase to this day. The office of the extension farm service started estimating the annual value of the pulpwood and lumber harvest in 1958, and it has shown an astonishing increase even since that time. In 1958, the value of pulpwood harvested on county farms was $3,372, and $900,000 worth of lumber was cut. Ten years later, in 1968, the pulpwood harvested was valued at $175,000 and $1,260,000 worth of lumber was cut. The growth was even greater in 1973, when the total pulpwood harvest was estimated at $390,000 and lumber sold was valued at a total of $6,300,000.

Beginning in 1970, a change was made in estimating the value of pulpwood and lumber harvested. Prior to that time, only a total figure was given while, starting in 1970, there was a breakdown between farm and non-farm sales of the products. The 1973 harvest of pulpwood, for instance, was valued at $250,000 on farms and $140,000 non-farm; the lumber harvest was estimated at $2,100,000 on farms and $4,200,000 non-farm. Non-farm means the harvest came from lands owned by mills or other individuals not engaged in farming.

An attempt was made by the state and federal forest services in April of 1929 to get Martin County to appropriate $700 for participation in the fire control program then being conducted on a cooperative basis. Under the proposal, a force of fire wardens would be organized to fight forest fires and carry on an educational program throughout the county. The federal and state government would provide matching funds for the service. No decision was reached at that time, but the program was later adopted, and Marvin Leggett of the Farm Life section was appointed the first warden for the county and served for a number of years.

In the North Carolina Year Book for 1869, the following were listed as among the most prominent farmers in Martin County at that time: Clayton Moore, H. M. Waters, Harmon Lilley, Joel Smithwick, Joshua Griffin, Horace Gurkin, W. Gray, George M. Burras, J. J. Coltrain, Alfred Manning, and Eli Roberson, of Jamesville; J. J. Biggs, John W. Watts, John Knight, Dr. Levi S. Yates, Henry Biggs, and Anson J. Mizzell, of Williamston; Thomas Jones, W. C. Eborn, Kinchen Taylor, and Lewis Thompson, of Hamilton.

The North Carolina Year Book for 1872 listed the following "prominent farmers and their acreages":

Hamilton: J. B. E. Anderson, 582; D. W. Anderson, 1,233; E. Brown, 446; John Best, 1,089; W. E. Best, 422; J. L. Ewell, 396; H.

Gatlin, 400; A. Staton, 700; Wm. R. Hyman, 370; T. W. Harrell, 172; Thomas Johnson, 800; Wm. P. Johnson, 950;

Jamesville: L.W. Cooper, 225; N.B. Fagan, 843; John Hyman, 11; J.E. Moore, 90; Clayton Moore, 5,872; D.B. Mann, 200; E.H. Roberson, 867; B.F. Roberson, 100.

Williamston: Mrs. B. Ballard, 1,215; D.W. Bagley, 195; Thomas Best, 215; J.H. Brown, 460; B.G. Howell, 1,158; D.O. Clark, 223; Bettie Hyman, 125; James Caraway, 550; A.H. Coffield, 1,200; Mary E. Cherry, 550; S. Duggand, 19; George Ellison, 200; E. Everett, 700; A.J. Merrill, 1,837; E.H. Robertson, 218.

The population of Martin County has had its ups and downs in official census returns over the 200 years of its history, but, with few exceptions, had showed a fairly steady increase up to 1950, when it started a decline that continued over the next 20 years. The drop was more pronounced in the decade between 1960 and 1970, falling from 27,139 to 24,730, a loss of 2,409 in that interval. One reason, without doubt, is the decline in number of tenant farmers, brought about by mechanization in farming methods, which has reduced by a substantial percentage the amount of hand labor required to produce crops in recent years. This brought on emigration from farms to urban centers; and, since Martin is predominantly rural and was without any great amount of industry until relatively recent years, this has meant that fairly steady streams of people have been leaving the farms for northern and mid-western population centers.

A report from the Martin County Agricultural Extension office about the middle of March, 1965, said a tremendous exodus from the farm was taking place at that time. It was then estimated that at least 150 families had left county farms since the first of January, most of them moving into towns, although some families were said to have continued to live on farms but had secured work in industry. Few families had been ejected from their homes. The chief cause for the exodus was said to be reduction in crop acreage and continued mechanization on farms.

It is now believed that this emigration has been slowed if not completely halted, a number of new industries having located in the county in the past five years, while some of those already here expanded their facilities, requiring additional workers to replace those who had moved away earlier.

CHAPTER III

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Credit for the early development of commerce and industry in Martin County is due principally to the geographical fact that elevations on the right banks of the Roanoke River are generally higher than on the left. This accounts for every river village or town being located on the right bank of the stream from its fall line in northeastern North Carolina to the point where it empties into Albemarle Sound. The other side, for the most part, is swampy in nature, making much of it unsuitable for cultivation as well as undesirable for settlements.

There is no agreement about the exact date of the first settlements on the right bank of the Roanoke River in what was to become Martin County, but it is known there was a trading post of sorts where Williamston is now located as early as 1730. It was called Tar Landing and served as a shipping point for river transportation of the tar, pitch, turpentine, and other forest products constituting the chief products of the region at that time. Prior to the coming of the white man, the Algonquins or Tuscarora Indians were said to have had a village at or near this point, known as Squhawky, or Skewarkey.

As additional settlers began to move into the section, other settlements were developed, practically all on the banks of the river, which provided about the only means of transportation as well as communication with other sections of the colony. Farmers and plantation owners moved in with their families and slaves and began the development of agriculture, which in turn created a need for merchants, bankers, brokers, professional men of all types, shippers, purveyors of various services, skilled workmen, millers, and the manufacturers of numerous articles which contribute to the make-up of the commerce and industry of the section.

Centralization of the first commercial undertakings in the county developed settlements that grew into towns at the three most convenient shipping points on the Roanoke River, all three continuing in existence today. Williamston, as the county seat, was first and was incorporated as a town in 1779; Jamestown, the second, was chartered in 1785, the name being changed to Jamsville in 1855; and Hamilton was third, incorporated in 1804. The other trading centers that grew into towns developed later, most after rail transportation became available. Robersonville, now the second largest town in the county, was chartered in 1872.

There is evidence of the existence of business and industrial operations in the county in the 1700's, but there are no written records at all for that period and very few about commercial operations in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Colonial General Assembly, as early as 1775, established several inspection points in Martin and Tyrrell Counties for hemp, flax, flaxseed, pork, beef, rice, flour, indigo, butter, tar, pitch, turpentine, staves, headings, lumber, shingles, and deerskin. They were at the following locations along the Roanoke River: Hog Town (near Hamilton), Gardner's Creek (near Jamesville), Daley's (Hill), and Welch's Creek. Prior to that, warehouses for the inspection of similar products had been established at the plantation of William Williams just below Kehukee Creek in the extreme northwestern part of the county. A petition signed by 50 people of the southwestern part of Martin County was presented to the assembly in 1800 asking that several official inspection stations be located on Tranters Creek, near the Pitt County line, for "naval stores, lumber, etc., which our county much abounds in." These stations would indicate that there was substantial commerce in the county at that time, but the names of those involved in it are not known.

One of the first pieces of evidence that men were working at their trades in the county at the time it was formed is contained in an indenture, dated the second Tuesday in October, 1774—the year the county was chartered—binding an apprentice to a shoemaker to learn that trade. At that time orphaned minors who had no near relatives to look after them became wards of the courts; and usually some prominent person was designated to act for the court in making the best arrangement possible for taking care of the minor. In this particular instance, John Hardison, a well known citizen of the county, was appointed to act for the court in executing the agreement, binding a young man named Samuel Nairn to Ezekiel Moore to learn the trade of shoemaking. This would indicate that Moore was working at his trade at that time, as the indenture was to continue in effect until Nairn reached the age of 21 years. Moore was required to furnish Nairn with food, lodging, and suitable clothing during the term of the latter's apprenticeship.

In 1777, the General Assembly appointed agents to purchase salt at the port of Roanoke at Edenton. According to the late Warren Biggs, a county historian, Williamston was also a port of entry at that time, sailing vessels bringing molasses and rum from the West Indies up the Roanoke and returning laden with tar, pitch, and turpentine. Up to recent years, signs of this shipping were still to be seen in the piles of ballast rocks near the old Williamston municipal wharf, in what is now Moratock Park. It is believed they were discarded there by sailing vessels before being loaded with county products for the return trip. Another indication of commercial activity about that time was recorded at a Council of State meeting in New Bern on September 2, 1777, when a passport was issued to Kenneth McKenzie of Martin County to depart the state for Europe or the West Indies within 30 days. It is believed he planned this to be a business trip.

The self-sufficiency of the larger plantations was something of a handicap to early development of retail trade. In addition to producing most of the supplies needed, plantation owners operated their own commissaries for the benefit of the working personnel and members of their families, even spinning the thread and weaving the cloth used in making work clothes, as well as curing and tanning animal hides for making and repairing shoes. Some of them had their own physicians to take care of the health requirements of those on the plantations.

One of the early commercial undertakings in Williamston was a hotel, located on the north side of East Main Street just about at the crest of what was known as "the river hill." It was built and operated for years by Edward Yellowley, a retired New England sea captain who moved into the section in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It was located next to the courthouse, the court sessions undoubtedly contributing materially to its successful operation, since the hotel served as a gathering place for visiting lawyers, judges, itinerant merchants and peddlers during the quarterly sessions.

An early business in the Hamilton section was conducted by John Taylor, whose executors sold a warehouse at Hamilton Public Landing owned by him at the time of his death in 1823. Waldo & Spruill, one of the first mercantile firms in that locality, came into possession of the warehouse a few years later. The Roanoke Navigation Company, which had headquarters in

Hamilton, was chartered in 1812 and held a virtual monopoly on water transportation on the upper reaches of the Roanoke River for many years.

WATER MILLS

In addition to mercantile establishments and similar businesses, there were numerous other commercial undertakings in various parts of the county during the latter part of the eighteenth and the entire nineteenth century. Not the least of these were the water mills, small streams being dammed to form ponds for storage of the water and to create the fall necessary for operation of the water wheels. The predominant religion being Baptist, the only mention of many of the early mills is to be found in records of baptismal services held at the various millponds. The location of many of these ponds cannot be determined today.

First recorded mention of an early mill is found in minutes of the Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church, near Williamston, about a baptismal service held at William Hardy's millpond in August, 1785. No location is given, and all that is known about it is that it must have been in the general vicinity of Williamston. There is a similar report in minutes of the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church in the year 1800, when a "baptizing" was held in the Fannie Harris or John Harris millpond, about three miles from Bear Grass, where the Turkey and Bear Grass Swamps unite to form the headwaters of Tranters Creek. Then there are several references to baptismal services at Daniel Biggs' and Thomas Biggs' mills for members of the Skewarkey church in the 1820's. It is known that Thomas Biggs was operating a mill sometime later, since a deed of conveyance, dated January 1, 1847, shows that he bought a Knowlton's Patent Corn Mill from William P. Collins of Raleigh for $37.50. Patented in 1845, this mill was said to be an improvement over earlier models.

Old records of various kinds, including statements, bills of sale, entries in diaries, yearbooks, and baptismal minutes of churches, indicate that 50 or more mills operated in the county at one time or another during the past century. [There may be duplications in the list, as some were called by several names at different periods, due to changes in millers or owners.] Dams were dotted throughout the county on small streams, some no more than 600 to 700 yards apart. Practically all of them were operated only as grist mills, for grinding corn into meal and wheat into flour, although there were a few during the latter part of the century which operated as saw mills and cotton gins. The list which follows probably is not complete, but it contains all the facts that could be obtained about as many as possible, in addition to those previously mentioned.

One of the first references to a water mill in the county is that of John Hardison having one at Tar Landing, in the Griffins-Jamesville section, during the 1770's or 1780's. There are no details, simply a statement that he had a mill there about that time. John Hardison was one of the leading figures in the early history of the county, having succeeded Thomas Hunter as as sheriff in July, 1776, and serving as one of the five Martin delegates to a state congress held at Halifax in November and December, 1776.

Woolard's Millpond was being used for baptismal services in 1829. Located in the Bear Grass-Griffins Township area on one of the small streams making up the headwaters of Smithwick's Creek, there are still some signs of the mill, including portions of the grinding rocks. Latham's Mill is likewise referred to in some of the old church records. It is believed to have been located on Reedy Swamp in Bear Grass Township and later was possibly known as Bear Trap Mill. Elder C. B. Hassell noted in his diary on January 5, 1847, that he went to the Amos Perry Mill in the Bear Grass section on that date and found its works decaying. Acting as guardian for the Perry heirs, who owned it, he rented the mill to Robert Lanier for $20 for that year.

Jesse Whitley I, son of Samuel Whitley II, operated a grist mill on Whitley's Canal (also known as Skewarkee Gut), just back of the present home of Billy Griffin on Woodlawn Drive in Williamston. The date is not definite, but the mill is believed to have been in operation during the early part of the 19th century, possibly around 1825-1830. The location is also known as "the Jack Hole."

C. B. Hassell has two references in his diary about mills being located on "Duggans or Sweeten Water Creek" by Henry Williams and William Williams about the middle of the century. The first reference, dated November 18, 1848, said "Henry Williams, etc.," were raising their mill that day on the creek about four miles from town, and Hassell sent some hands to help them. The second entry, dated March 14, 1850, said Hassell went with William Williams and lady to see the Williams mills on Duggan's Creek. A number of persons were reported to have been there to witness the starting of one of the grist mills. A Mr. Hunter was the millwright who made the installation, and Mr. Hassell reported that "the runner went around handsomely and ground corn very well for a beginning." Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church minutes report baptismal services being held at Dr. Levi Yates' Millpond in June, 1865, that being the only mention of such a mill, whose location was not given.

Gorham Mill is mentioned several times in some of the old records, including the description of boundaries set when Bear Grass Township was established in October, 1879. It is possible that the pond was known earlier as Latham's and later as Bear Trap Millpond. It is located on the west side of the present Bear Trap Mill Road several hundred yards from the Rogerstown intersection, the stream being known as Reedy Swamp and a little farther downstream as Little Creek. There were a number of mills and ponds in this vicinity at various times in the 19th century, some of them going back to the very earliest days of the county. The North Carolina Yearbook for 1867-68 lists Gorham's Mill as being owned by George Britton at that time, and there are reports that there was a sawmill there about the time of the Civil War. According to Eli Bowen, who is a recognized authority on early mills and millponds in the county, another mill stood about three-quarters of a mile up a branch which emptied into Bear Trap Pond, just behind the Green Acres Camp Ground.

The Rawls Mill, or Peal's Mill, was located about a mile downstream from the Bear Trap Mill site, right about where present U. S. Highway 17 crosses Reedy Swamp, approximately five miles south of Williamston. Originally called Rawls Mill, this was the site of the only Civil War battle fought on Martin County soil. On November 2, 1862, the 26th N. C. Regiment fought a delaying action there against the Union raiding army of Maj. Gen. John G. Foster. One Confederate and six Union soldiers were killed in the skirmish, the Confederates burning the bridge over the creek at that point to delay the advance. Staton Peel later owned the mill (when it became known as Peel's Mill) and used it for sawing logs and ginning cotton in addition to grinding corn and wheat. He also operated a store there, the mill ceasing operations in the latter part of the nineteenth century. At various times in later years the site, generally known as the "Old Mill" has been used as a restaurant, country store, and filling station.

Eli Bowen says there are some signs that a mill pond was once located on Reedy Swamp about 600 yards in front of his store on the Williamston-Bear Grass Road. Some years ago the grinding stones and old sills were still visible, and he believes a mill was located there as far back as 150 years ago or more. It was called Bowen's Mill. According to Mr. Bowen, he was told a woman owned the mill at one time and, following a heavy rain, the water began overflowing the earthen dam. She started carrying dirt in her apron to fill in the low places, but it was a losing fight, and the water continued to rise until it washed out the dam.

About a mile downstream from Bowen's Mill, just off Reedy Swamp on Spring Branch, is another site which could have been the location of Rogers' Mill. There are no details about it known except that the pond was created by an earthen dam about 150 yards in length and waist high, with a 12 or 14 foot break in the middle. Eli Bowen says it could have belonged to the Biggs family at one time, and is thought to have been operating in 1733.

Black Swamp (also called Back Swamp and Dog Branch at times) originates back of the Williamston Packing Company plant, located on McCaskey Road where it crosses the SCL Railroad in Williamston Township; from there the stream runs southwardly into Bear Grass Township. There were at least four or five water mills located on it at various times in the nineteenth century between its source and where it joins Reedy Swamp and Little Creek near the Old Mill Inn. Names are not available, but there are some signs of dams at several of the sites and reports of others were handed down by word of mouth from older generations.

The uppermost one was located on Black Swamp near the old Harrell field, and the Roanoke Country Club golf course, and is reached by the old Cedar Hill Road. The next mill was located west of Back Swamp church, also near the golf course, on the north side of the Bear Grass-Williamston Road. There is another old mill site on the southeast side of the road, located back of the residence of Walter Hassell, and still another farther down the Black Swamp Stream near the present Grace Edwards home.

There are a couple of other mill sites in Bear Grass Township, located on Turkey Swamp. One, located near the Murphy Whitaker store about a mile from Bear Grass off the road to Stokes, was known as Leggett's Mill. It was operated at one time by John Bryant Leggett and later by Jerry Leggett. The dam was said to have been washed out in 1908. There was a Biggs' Mill on Turkey Swamp just off the road from Bear Grass to Everetts. The site is near the Whitehurst and Taylor farms and the home of Toby Bowen. No other information is available.

One of the better-known water mills in the county was Hardison's Mill, located in the Farm Life section of Griffins Township. The exact date of its establishment cannot be ascertained, but it is believed it operated for well over 100 years before closing down around the middle of the present century. The first known owner of the property was a Mr. Coltrain, but whether he built or bought it is not known. The next owner was David Hardison, and it was by his name that the site became known and continues so to this day, although the mill has not been operated for approximately a quarter century. The third owners of record were W. C. Manning and N. R. Manning, who acquired it prior to the twentieth century. Early in the 1900's, W. C. Manning sold his interest to his partner, and the latter then sold half of the business to Joseph M. Lilley. The property eventually came into possession of Gabe and Tom Roberson, who operated it as long as economically feasible. During much of the present century a store was operated in connection with the mill, and it was more or less a gathering place for the entire community. A sawmill was operated there during the latter part of the mill's existence, but it was as a meal and a flour grinding operation that it gained most of its recognition.

Another of the better-known mills which operated well into the present century was what was known in its latter days as the Daniel & Staton Mill. It was one of the larger operations of its kind, and its pond became one of the favorite "swimming holes" for people of Williamston and vicinity during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The stream on which it was located was usually called Smithwick's Creek above the pond and "Sweeten" Water (later Sweet Water) Creek below it. This mill was also known as "The Big Mill" and Foster's Mill right after the Civil War, when a man named Foster operated it. It operated both as a sawmill and grist mill after that time. J. G. Staton of Williamston and Henry Daniel, who lived at the mill site, about five miles from Williamston, operated the mill in this century until it went out of business in the 1930's.

There is a mention of William Ward's Mill, but no indication as to when it was in operation or where it was located. It is believed it could have been on one of the branches of Smithwick's Creek in the vicinity of Fone's Bridge, where there was a Ward's School dating back to the early 1880's or before. There were signs 50 to

60 years ago that a mill had been located on the upper reaches of Sweet Water or Smithwick's creek above Hardison's Mill in Griffins Township. Some accounts list it as the Manning or Alfred Roberson Mill, and it was said to have had a cotton gin in addition to its grist mill. Still another mill about which little can be learned is one that could have been named Nowell's or Yarrell's Mill. There seems to be some confusion about its name and the stream on which it was located. One record says it was named Nowell and was located on a creek near Yarrell's Bridge, while another says the mill was named Yarrell, and still another says the mill was on Yarrell Creek. Another mill site about which nothing can be learned, was located at the head of Smithwick's Creek near H. U. Peel's farm home, and a half mile east of U.S. 17 on the dividing line between Griffins and Bear Grass Township.

There was a Hyman's Millpond adjacent to the lands of Elisha Everett and others in Robersonville Township in 1858. John L. Knight lived on the 500-acre tract of land there at the time. Then there was an Elisha Everett Mill in the same township, located about a half mile east of Sam Everett's place, near the bridge over a stream. It ground both corn and wheat, discontinuing operations about 1914. It was a popular place for swimming and fishing, and was also used for baptismal services by several churches.

There are signs of three mills and millponds on the old Sherrod farm, now owned by Henry Winslow, just above Rainbow Banks in Hamilton Township. The three dams were spaced about 500 yards apart, and there is an old iron balance wheel at the one farthest downstream, located southeast of the present Beaunit plant near Hamilton. No information is available as to the names or when they were in operation.

There is a mention of Outterbridge's Mill in Elder C. B. Hassell's diary under date of November 3, 1862. This mill, also known later as Coffield's, was located where one of the Conoho Creek branches crosses Highway 42, not far from Butler's Bridge on N. C. 125. An entry in the minutes of the Spring Green Primitive Baptist Church refers to a baptismal service at Outterbridge Mill on the fourth Sunday in March, 1868. Apparently the baptismal subject was Cata Burwell, colored.

Mobley's Mill, located on one of the Conoho Creek tributaries which is the dividing line between Williamston and Poplar Point Townships on N. C. Highway 125, was in operation for many years, probably having first been known as Everett's Mill. It was acquired in this century by W. O. Abbitt, who continued to operate it as a water mill until the 1930's, later installing electric motors and operating a modern corn meal and feed and grain mill there.

There is mention of the Speight or Williams Mill on a Conoho Creek tributary, located on the Harrell Everett Estate farm on Highway 125 in Poplar Point Township. The mill was in operation around or before the Civil War and there are still signs of it there now.

Conoho Primitive Baptist Church held a number of baptismal services in several different millponds between 1876 and 1903, some of which are not mentioned in other old records. For instance, the minutes of that church show that baptizings were held at Thompson's Mill twice in May, and once each in July, September, and October, 1876. There is no indication of its location, but it is presumed to have been on Conoho Creek or one of its tributaries in the Hamilton-Goose Nest section. The same church had a similar service in September, 1886, eight persons being baptized at that time. There was a baptismal service at Sherrod's Grist Mill in July, 1891, and also in May, 1903. This mill is reported to have been in Hamilton Township on Conoho Creek, but a more definite location has not been established. It could have been one of the three located on the Sherrod farm near Rainbow Banks mentioned earlier.

The Burnett Mill was another one on Conoho Creek, undoubtedly somewhere in the Oak City-Hamilton area, although no other information about it is known. There is mention of a Slade Mill on Conoho Creek, but its location, too, is a mystery; and there are mentions of several other mill sites in the upper part of the county not further identified.

There was a Ward's Mill on Conoho Creek in 1862, believed to have been located near Ballard's Bridge in Poplar Point Township. The mill appears on a map of a road between Hamilton and Williamston.

Probably one of the first recorded industrial undertakings, other than operation of grist mills, was "a cotton gin, screw, cotton house, and shelters," which were sold, along with a half acre lot, by Joseph Waldo to Bryant Bennett on August 20, 1845. The lot was said to have been on the Hamilton-Tarboro Road, and the total price was $300. While the location is not definite, it could have been on the Hassell Road or present State Road No. 42, near Butler's Bridge. In later years, the Coffields operated a water mill just off N. C. 125 on the Hassell Road, and the cotton gin could have been located at about the same place and operated by water power. The deed was witnessed by Benjamin Martin and Joseph G. Carroway. W. W. Watts was register of deeds at that time. While there was little industry then, by 1906 there were 21 cotton gins operating in the county.

A "steam mill," probably a sawmill, was in operation on the Roanoke River near Hamilton in 1844-45, according to a marriage agreement entered into by Mary Rives, daughter of Peter and Mary Rives, and her husband, Dr. Samuel Cooper Benjamin. One of the items involved was her one-half interest "in and to a steam mill and fixtures," as well as the land on which they were situated, as recorded by deed from Jesse P. Parker to T. W. Ward, trustee, "for my sole use and benefit." Mary Rives Benjamin died between June and October, 1855, exact date not known, and Dr. Benjamin was executor of her estate.

There are references in various papers to a few steam mills operating in the county during the 1840's and 1850's, but it was not until after the Civil War that they began to really make their presence felt as a factor in the economy. The Bryant Bennett papers in the Duke University Library include a daybook for operation of the Hamilton Steam Mill from February, 1854, to January, 1857. It operated both as a sawmill and flour mill at that time. Apparently the mill was drawing its timber supply from Staton Swamp, as there is a list of hands employed there and also an account of equipment purchased in 1849. More than one person owned the mill then, for there is reference in July, 1855, to "land we bought."

Legal papers of 1851 in the Bryant Bennett collection evidently relate to this sawmill, the only one known to have been located at Hamilton at that time. One document is an agreement of May 30, 1851, in which Samuel Cooper Benjamin and Jesse P. Parker became partners for building a stream sawmill on the Roanoke River near Hamilton. There is also a May 13, 1851, deed and indenture concerning the sawmill. Henry Mitchell is believed to have owned the Hamilton Steam Mill later, operating it until his death in 1863. Bryant Bennett was executor of his estate, and his collection of papers include financial records of the mill's operation.

Elder C. B. Hassell's diary for April, 1851, contains references to two manufacturing enterprises in the Williamston section at that time. On April 8, 1851, he wrote that in the afternoon he "went out with Dr. Joseph Burnett to see his shingle factory. The machinery was interesting. One circular saw was turning out about 4,000 two-foot shingles per day, handsomely sawed." Then, on April 30, 1851, he reported he "went to see Moore & Lloyd's stream mill, just put into operation. The machinery worked well, and the mill is likely to do well and prove a profitable investment."

More merchants, tradesmen and professional men began moving into the county around the beginning of the nineteenth century. The stores became larger and better stocked; carpenters, blacksmiths, brickmasons, and other skilled craftsmen came in to work at their trades; and more physicians and lawyers arrived, enabling the towns and settlements to expand and take on added importance as time went on.

Proprietors of the early mercantile establishments usually carried just about every type of general merchandise, including groceries, clothing, furniture, housewares, farm implements, hardware, tools, notions, fencing, produce, even coffins and caskets, and supplies of all kinds for use by everyone from "the cradle to the grave." They also served as agents for shipping lines and stage lines, bought and sold farm and manufactured products as brokers or commission merchants, held commissions as notaries public, justices of the peace, and in the militia, helped their customers with legal papers, and the illiterates in reading and writing, and generally made themselves indispensable to the life of their communities. Quite a lot of them were also licensed or ordained ministers of the gospel, mostly of the Primitive Baptist faith, enabling them to continue their services to the public on a seven-day basis.

One of the first mentions of a store in Martin County occurs in postal records, showing that a post office was established at "Hamilton or Hogton" [also referred to in some records as Hogtown] on June 22, 1796, David Clark being listed as postmaster. Usually, post offices were set up in general stores in the villages then in existence. A few years later, perhaps in 1804, the post office name was changed to Clark's Store, Kenneth Clark and William Clark also served as postmasters prior to that time. Subsequently the office was discontinued under that name, but reestablished as Clark's store in April, 1819, when William M. Clark was again named postmaster; and then the same year the name was again changed back to Hamilton and has so remained since. It is very probable, however, that the two Clarks continued to operate their store or stores there during that entire time.

It is highly probable that the first postmaster at Williamston, Thomas Jones, was likewise a storekeeper. He rendered his first accounting to the General Post Office on October 1, 1793. He was succeeded by Thomas Hunter in 1797, and Richard Williams was appointed in 1800, holding the office until 1808. It is more than likely that all of them were in business at Williamston at the time they were serving as postmasters, as there was very little remuneration for the office at that time.

There is no information obtainable about early merchants and business establishments in Jamesville, but is also very likely that the early postmasters in that community were among them. The town was incorporated as Jamestown in 1785, but it was not until February 23, 1827, that a post office was established there, and it was called Gardner's Bridge, with Maurice Gardner as postmaster. He was followed by eight other postmasters between then and 1855, when the name of both the town and the post office was changed to Jamesville. All of the eight---John G. Smithwick, Ameleck C. Williams, Maurice S. Moore, A.B. Mariner, George W. Ward, Jerome B. Sawyer, Joseph A. Williams, and William J. Harrison---were supposed to have been engaged in business of one kine or another in addition to their duties as postmaster. Franklin Ward was postmaster at the time the name of both the town and post office was changed to Jamesville in 1855.

An early merchant in the Hamilton section was Justin L. Edwards, who sold a number of items of general merchandise to Abigail Sherrod, according to records of an account in the Bryant Bennett papers now in the Duke University Library at Durham. Bennett evidently had something to do with settlement of the Abigail Sherrod estate, as the account record is dated November 25, 1826, and was filed with the Bennett papers under date of March 18, 1828. It was recorded in some of the other papers that she died prior to September 19, 1827.

More information is obtainable about the early merchants and business people of Williamston, since it was not only the county seat but also the oldest and largest town in the county. One of those who was to become most prominent, although not in this county, was Reuben Ross, descendant of a prominent family of the "Islands" section of Williams Township. Shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century, he decided to sell his farm holdings and go into business in Williamston with an unnamed partner. He was not very successful, however, for a combination of reasons. The cost of building a residence, store, and other necessary buildings and stocking the store was more than anticipated, and his partner, due to unexpected circumstances, was not able to put up his share of capital. Ross liquidated his assets and paid off his creditors, being left with only a few hundred dollars after this was done. He was ordained a Primitive Baptist minister about that time and became leader of a party of emigrants which left this section to settle in the "Cumberland" region of Tennessee and southern Kentucky, where he became quite prominent as an elder in Primitive Baptist circles. He is the subject of a biography, Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross, written in 1882 by his son, James Ross, which contains a number of references to life in Williamston around the late 1700's and early 1800's.

Joseph Biggs, an elder in the Primitive Baptist Chruch, was engaged in a general mercantile business in Williamston for many years during the early part of the nineteenth century, starting about 1810. He was joined by his son, Joseph D. Biggs, in the 1820's, and the firm was known as Joseph Biggs & Son after that time. The elder Joseph Biggs died in 1844, and the business was continued by his son. Another pioneer in the mercantile field was Docton W. Bagley, who went into business in 1801 in Williamston and continued until just before his death in 1878. He took a leading part in all community undertakings, and was especially active in organizing and serving as an officer in transportation companies, including boat lines and railroads. He was also a strong supporter of the Confederacy during the Civil War and largely financed the organization of Company H of the First North Carolina Regiment, named "Bagley's Guards" in his honor.

Elder C. B. Hassell, probably the county's most successful merchant in the nineteenth century, says in his diary that he worked in several Williamston stores before going into business for himself with a partner in 1831. One of his entries says that while he was still a boy (prior to 1824) he worked briefly in the store of Joseph Griffin and the store of Ely Smithwick. During the winter of 1824-25 he was employed by Henry B. Smithwick, a Williamston merchant, at a salary of $5 a month. In the spring of 1825, he went to work in the store of Docton W. Bagley at "somewhat more than $5 a month." Then, in the fall of 1828, Hassell took a position as clerk with Nymphus Price, Williamston merchant, at $10 to $12 per month. Other Williamston merchants about this time were J. Reuben Ellis, William Nicholson, Samuel Hyman, Thomas Shaw & Company, Thomas Yarrell, Burroughs & Lanier, Joseph Biggs & Son, W. Martin, Ezra F. Holmes, and possibly others.

Economic conditions in Williamston and Martin County for the following 30 or so years are probably best reflected in entries from Elder C. B. Hassell's diary covering that period. Early in the 1830's he decided to go into business for himself, forming a partnership with Henry Williams, and on June 1, 1831, they opened a store in Williamston under the name of Williams & Hassell. Speaking of the venture, which was to launch him on one of the most successful careers of the pre-Civil War period in this section, the Hassell diary says: "Mr. Williams was a man of capital and furnished the stock of goods and the storehouse free of expense, save the interest on the capital stock invested—and C. B. H. (Hassell) shared one-third of the profits and Mr. Williams the remaining two-thirds."

The firm of Williams & Hassell prospered, but Henry Williams wished to devote his full time to farming and, against the wishes of Hassell, the partnership was dissolved September 11, 1834. Hassell then invited Henry Williams' younger brother, William S. Williams, to join him in the business, and they formed a partnership the same year, 1834, with the understanding that the younger Williams was to devote his personal attention to the business. They began having difficulties immediately, and the firm of Hassell & Williams was dissolved in November, 1837, following the panic of that year; a lawsuit brought by Williams the following year was settled out of court.

In the year 1836, the Hassell diary shows prices of produce were extravagantly high and business was brisk. Hassell visited and purchased goods in the cities of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia in adopting measures for an extensive trade. The firm of Hassell & Williams sustained some severe losses in 1837 when it had a large quantity of naval stores on hand and the price dropped sharply; spirits of turpentine, for instance, declined from 70 cents a gallon to 25 cents. After dissolution of the firm, Hassell carried on the business alone until July, 1838, when Henry Williams bought out the stock in order to set up his new son-in-law, Ezekiel S. Whitley, in business. Hassell sold Williams his entire stock of goods, a turpentine distillery, and his interest in the schooner "Culoda" (spelling questionable).

After selling out his business to Henry Williams in July, 1838, Hassell went north in September and bought a new stock of goods, which arrived in Williamston about the middle of October. He rented a store in the upper end of town (south side of Main at Smithwick), later bought at a cost of $650, and did a fair business for about 15 months before another recession slowed things down for about a year. Next, his diary records that "The cash store intended to be put in operation in 1841 did very well, was a good movement and brought in quite an increase of custom, so long as it lasted; but, after about a twelvemonth, the business merged into the credit system again." He says, however, that since he dealt sparingly in produce after this, his business continued good. By "Dealing sparingly in product," he probably meant he ceased trading goods for naval stores products, which cost him heavily, in the depressions or "panics" of 1837 and 1840.

In addition to his mercantile operations in Williamston during the 1830's. Elder Hassell also took a flier in silk production during the latter part of that decade. In 1836, he notes that he purchased at an equity sale a 26-acre plot near his home called "The Yellowley Field, on which is now situated my cocoonery." Later, around 1840-41, he reported that his speculation in "multicaulis" trees turned out badly and he lost at least $500. The "multicaulis" tree was said to be a variety of white mulberry grown especially to feed silkworms needed to produce the cocoons used in the silk industry. The silkworm boom in the United States reached a peak around 1839 and collapsed shortly thereafter.

In 1842 Hassell bought back the business he had sold to Williams & Whitley in 1838 and operated both stores for about two years before consolidating them. He continued merchandising in Williamston until January, 1845, when he sold out his entire stock of goods to F. W. Moore, who had been working in his stores for several years. He did not remain out of business very long, however, as he was again buying and selling in 1847. An entry in his diary for April 14, 1847, says "S. M. Smithwick had a boat to arrive from Albemarle Sound with 4,000 herrings; price, $4 per thousand. Fish were exceedingly scarce up to this time." The same year he noted high prices at a slave sale in Williamston—"Men were sold for as much as $850." The 1850 census showed that Elder Hassell owned 14 slaves at the time.

Hassell noted in his diary on June 3, 1847, that "corn, pork, fodder, flour and nearly all the necessaries of life" were higher than he had ever seen them before, "on account of the Mexican War and the starvation in Europe." Corn was $5 per barrel; pork, $10 per 100 pounds; fodder, $1.25 per hundred; flour, $10 to $12 per barrel. He had bought 10 barrels of corn from Alva Rogers at $5 per barrel. On September 29, that year, he made an entry, "Put on a new suit of clothes received from and made by Berdike & Clements of Hamilton. Did not like them."

Elder Hassell was acustomed to making numerous buying trips north in the 1840's and 1850's, sometimes going twice each year. He made an exceptionally long trip in march, 1848, leaving on march 6 and returning April 1, spending 17 days in New York and also transacting business in Norfolk, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, buying about $8,000 worth of merchandise. An entry dated August 25, 1848, reported: "Brother (Joseph D.) Biggs attended a sale at Jameston of some property formerly belonging to Brother Joshua Robertson, deceased, and purchased the Broad Creek Fishery for $1,970." A little later, on September 13, he noted that he "had his four-mule wagon to move the goods and chattels of Delep (?) Wolf, a bootmaker, who had settled in Williamston with his family." Where he moved from was not mentioned. Another miscellaneous item in the diary noted that the total cost of Hassell's new house, located on Main Street in Williamston—work on which had been started the previous year—was $3,310,a large amount for that period.

There is a gap of several years in Hassell's reports on economic conditions—from the late 1840's until around 1853, when the times became harder, shortages started to develop, prices were higher, and there were numerous business failures throughout the country, possibly brought on by the disturbing influences that were to bring on the Civil War. Hassell noted in February, 1852, that much corn was being brought into the county from outside because of the short crop locally in 1851. On November 14, 1853, he made the following entry: "Capt. Nathan Thompson's property was sold today by Asa Crawford under a deed of trust to satisfy creditors. The hotel brought $2,000, the stable lots $825." In December of that year he noted that salt was becoming scarce, there was none of any consequence to sell. He was selling it at 80 cents a bushel and Waldo at Hamilton was selling some at $1 a bushel. "None in Norfolk—none in Washington." Three days after the above report, he said there was "No salt for the people here or elsewhere at any reasonable rates."

In January, 1854, his diary had the following notation: "Negroes hiring for $200 each simply to work in swamps." Then in December, 1854, he noted: "The money market becoming tighter every day. A merchant by the name of Peacock in Jameston has also made an assignment (become bankrupt). Received a good many letters tonight form New York and elsewhere, showing the tightness of the times." On June 12, 1855, his diary records that a Mr. Hughes of the firm of Townes & Hughes, commission merchants of Barbados, was in his store that day soliciting business. Hassell then wrote that a new era had arrived, when merchants not only from northern cities but also from the West Indian islands began visiting the Atlantic States soliciting patronage.

An indication of the value of farm land in the county around the middle of the 19th century is given in a Hassell diary entry of June 28, 1855, stating that real property was being sold "at higher rates than ever before known." As an example, he cited sale of the property of the late A. S. Mooring, former sheriff of the county. It was comprised of about 500 acres known in this century as the Marshall Wilson farm (recently owned by W. G. Peele) and located in and adjacent to the eastern part of the town of Williamston along the Roanoke River. According to the diary entry, Mooring had bought the property in 1846 for $800; and it was sold in June, 1855, for $9,000, "a clear profit of $8,200 in nine years' time."

Conditions continued to deteriorate, according to the diary entries. On May 21, 1857, it was reported that provisions and provender were going up in prices. Retail prices were quoted as 90 cents per bushel for corn, $2 per bushel for peas, 15 to 20 cents per pound for bacon, 16⅔ cents per pound for pork, and 20 cents per pound for lard. The price of molasses was as high as 90 cents per gallon, sugar was 12½ to 18 cents per pound, and fodder and hay were $1.50 per hundredweight. In February of the following year, 1858, it was reported: "Persons making assignments almost every day. A financial storm yet raging in Williamston and throughout the country." The inflation that became rampant during the Civil War is reflected by a diary entry on November 12, 1863, that "Corn sold at auction brought from $33 to $40 per barrel, averaging $36 per barrel."

Another Williamston business with a lengthy and successful history was the one known in later years by the name of Carstarphen, although it was started by a man named Pinner. The exact date of its founding is not known, but the store was said to be upwards of a century old when it closed on January 2, 1930. Probably it was sometime around 1840 when Joshua F. Pinner reportedly sailed up the Roanoke River with a stock of goods and opened a general store at the intersection of Main and the sixth cross street, now known as Smithwick Street, on the lot adjacent to that presently occupied by the Williamston Municipal Building. William Henry Carstarphen, who was born in Nansemond County, Va., near Suffolk, in 1822, became associated with Pinner about the time of the opening, according to the best information available, and became sole owner in the early part of 1857.

Mr. Carstarphen continued operation of the business under the firm name of W. H. Carstarphen General Store throughout the Civil War period and until his death in May, 1894. He constructed a large new wooden store building in 1872, after the first building was burned, and it became a landmark and shopping center that was known throughout the entire section. Built of heart pine, the building was said to be one of the most substantial ever erected in Williamston, and when it was torn down in 1934, its lumber was used to construct the county's first high school gymnasium as part of a Civil Works Administration project. After being used as a gymnasium and for other school purposes the building was again torn down in the 1960's, and much of the lumber was said to be still in good condition nearly a century after it was first used.

Following the death of W. H. Carstarphen in 1894, his son, Charles Daughtrey Carstarphen, became owner of the business and continued to operate and expand it under the firm name of C. D. Carstarphen & Company for some 35 years, until his death in May, 1929. Both the Carstarphens were active in community and county civic, political, educational, and religious affairs throughout their lifetimes. Both were pillars in the Methodist church in Williamston; W. H. Carstarphen also served as trustee and later as chairman of the Williamston Academy board of trustees; and C. D. Carstarphen served as a member of the Williamston School Board and as county treasurer for a number of years. Following the latter's death, the business was gradually phased out, finally closing its doors on January 2, 1930. Some time later the building and lot were sold to Sinclair Oil Company, and a service station has been operated at the site since 1934.

There are scattered references to different people being engaged in various businesses in the county during the nineteenth century, though their locations are not always identifiable. for instance, there is an invoice dated April 3, 1824, among the William Slade papers at Duke University Library showing that a Samuel Folk was engaged in the mercantile business at that time, and, although the location was not given, it is presumed to have been in the Williamston section.

Bryant Bennett was one of the most active merchants and businessmen of the Hamilton section during much of the early and middle parts of the nineteenth century. A lot of his papers are in the Duke University Library, but the collection is so voluminous and varied that it has not been completely catalogued. He was involved in a great many undertakings of practically every type and kind, operating a mercantile business himself, and acting as a partner in several other firms at different times, serving as a commission and forwarding merchant for sundry farm and forest products, serving as owner and agent for Roanoke River boats, even acting as attorney for at least one Revolutionary War soldier in pressing a claim for a military land warrant. In addition he was a partner with others in the redemption of notes in North Carolina, and in borrowing and lending money in New York, Baltimore, and Norfolk. The papers also show that he was the guardian or trustee for a number of minors, widows, and others under provisions of wills, court orders, or powers of attorney. The following items were gleaned from the Bennett collection and other contemporary papers in the Duke Library.

J. L. Edwards was a general merchant, probably in Hamilton although the location is not shown, in November, 1826, according to an account of "sundry merchandise" being sold to Abigail Sherrod on that date. Another account shows Jordan Waters was a blacksmith, also probably in Hamilton, about that date. Thomas Pugh & Company was a firm dealing in general merchandise, including brandy, molasses, salt, and cloth. In 1827-1828; and a receipt in the Bennett papers shows that Durin S. Marriner was a coffin maker in 1827, probably in the Jamesville section. An account of May 30, 1834, shows that Asa Biggs and his brother, William, were partners in a general mercantile firm and wholesale dealers in turpentine in Williamston; and B. G. Bentley, address not given, was a general merchant in September, 1836.

Waldo Cloman was a general merchant in Hamilton in 1839, selling, among other things, hats, shoes, fabrics and tobacco.

An invoice of April 6, 1846, shows that the firm of Z. Neal & Company operated another general store in the county. Lemuel Barnhill was a Martin County blacksmith, location not otherwise identified, according to statements issued to McGilvary Staton dated January, 1844, and July, 1845. There is a bill in the Bryant Bennett papers at Duke from J. M. Hussey, a cobbler, dated February 6, 1847; and the William Slade papers have reference to a Mr. Simonds being the keeper of a boarding house in Hamilton in August, 1849. Bryant Bennett had a receipt from a printer named Murphy a little later the same year, location not being mentioned.

The census of 1850 lists a few people not mentioned elsewhere as being in business in the county about that time. Among the merchants were R. C. Weathersbee, Theophelus Hyman, B. M. Wilkerson, William H. Sherrod, William G. Jordan, Ebenezer Baker, John B. Witeen, and Joseph A. Williams. There was a "trader" by the name of James A. Daniel, and three tailors, L. L. Clements, Henry Budeke, and William Wyatt. Isaac B. Brady and Daniel H. Hamilton were coach makers and Miles Everitt was listed as a buggy maker, while John Robason, B. (Bitha) Leggett, and James Giles were wheelwrights at that time.

The 1850 census also listed the folloiwng as being engaged in business: Bryant Whitfield, gunsmith; Stark Gardner, silversmith; John J. Wilson, Solomon Lee, Simon Rogerson, and William Bailey, shoemakers; Phillip Hodges, Davis Cherry, Redding Haislip, and John Roebuck, coopers; Allen Bullock, Alphonso Leggett, and Willis Craft, blacksmiths; Jesse Whitley and John D. Latham, millers. The four lawyers at that time were W. L. Mizelle, Asa Biggs, J. G. Carraway, and G. B. Clements. Addresses were not listed for any of them.

According to a statement of January 1, 1850, Bryant Bennett was then in partnership with a man named Williams in operating a general store, but the partnership was dissolved in September, 1851. Three firms that dealt in piece goods (locations not identified) during 1850 were Bell & Brother, M. C. & R. Cherry, and G. L. Moore. James S. Williams was a dealer in general merchandise in Williamston in early 1850, and R. W. Hyman & Company was another general mercantile firm whose operation was mentioned that year, on July 12 (its location was not mentioned). Joseph Waldo & Company was a firm of whoelsale merchants in

Hamilton, according to a legal instrument involving a shipment of corn to Norfolk, Va., on December 13, 1852.

It is not definitely known when the first brick store was built in Williamston, but it was occupied by a mercantile partnership composed of Amelek Williams and John C. Lamb sometime prior to the Civil War. The Williamston Mercury had an advertisement in its issue of April 20, 1859, stating that Williams & Lamb delivered ice at Steamboat Wharf each morning except Sunday for 1½ cents a pound; or for 2½ cents a pound at the store of C. B. Hassell. Mr. Lamb became a distinguished Confederate officer and was fatally wounded during the war; the first brick store was burned in 1883. Thomas L. Liddon, a bricklayer-contractor, located in Hamilton in 1851 or 1852 and advertised for work in this and adjoining counties. He could have constructed that first brick store in Williamston.

According to the "General Commercial Advertiser," directing published in 1853, Hamilton had the following general merchandise firms at that time: Bryant Bennett, Waldo & Yarrell, S. and A. Johnson, and Williams, Whitaker & Weathersbee. Jameston (Jamesville) had three stores; Jones & Williams, W. W. Ward, and C. Moon; Gardner's Bridge had one, J. J. Smith; and Williamston had the following: A. Cohn, Johnson & Biggs, Moore & Lloyd, Joshua F. Pinner, and N. Thompson. On March 10, 1853, an entry in the C. B. Hassell diary noted that L. Johnson had sold his interest in the firm of Johnson & Biggs to Eli Biggs, who had been employed at the Hassell store for some time. Eli Biggs left that day to become partner with his brother, William Biggs, in the operation of the Biggs Brothers general store. The Hassell diary also mentions that a man by the name of Peacock operated a mercantile business in Jameston (Jamesville) in December, 1854.

Bennett, Price & Company operated a mercantile store in Hamilton in 1855, an old account record showing the firm did business at that time with William T. Bilbro. The Bennett in this firm evidently was not Bryant Bennett, for he is recorded in another account as being a general merchant in Hamilton at the same time. J. R. and W. B. Lanier were partners in august, 1855, in a dry goods store at Williamston, according to a statement for "cloth and clothes" in the papers of McGilvary M. Staton in the Duke University Library. The Roanoke Steamboat Company was organized and incorporated on November 8, 1856, with the following officers: Docton Warren Bagley, president; J. J. Martin, secretary; Henry Williams and L. L. Clement, directors. All of the officers were from Williamston except Clement, who was a Hamilton merchant and Bagley's son-in-law. This firm bought and operated the ill-fated steamer "Liberty," which burned at its dock in Plymouth a little later, on October 15, 1857. The firm was dissolved a few months later.

There were more advertisements of Hamilton merchants than of Williamston merchants in the April, 1856, issues of the Democratic Banner, the Williamston newspaper. Among the Hamilton merchants who were advertising at that time were Waldo & Bell, jewelers and general merchants; Mrs. J. N. Bell, millinery; H. Burdike; and Joseph Waldo & Company, commission merchants. G. L. Moore, Esq., commission merchant, and J. F. Pinner & Company were the only two Williamston mercantile firms which had advertisements, although several professional men there had ads, including S. W. Watts and Joseph G. Carraway, attorneys, and Doctors Cloman and Warrock, physicians. There was also an advertisement for job printing by the owners of the newspaper, Augustus Moore and J. J. Martin.

John Bruce, a wholesale commission merchant of New York City, visited Williamston in October, 1857. He had a substantial business with many merchants in Martin County, and during the war was generally considered a Southern sympathizer. Following the war, he charged off much of the balance due him and helped many of the merchants to work out settlement of their debts.

Just prior to the start of the war, in 1859, A. C. Williams and John C. Lamb formed a partnership to conduct a general store in Williamston, and Mr. Lamb was also joined by his brother, Wilson G. Lamb, in another firm to engage in the wholesale lumber and shingle business. Both businesses were to be short-lived, however, as the two Lamb brothers, who came to Williamston from Pasquotank County, went into the Confederate Army in the early days of the war. Both had distinguished careers. John C. Lamb attained the rank of lieutenant colonel and commanded the 17th North Carolina Regiment when he was fatally wounded May 20, 1864, at Bermuda Hundreds, Va. Wilson G. Lamb enlisted and attained the status of commissioned officer before the struggle was over.

With the start of the Civil War in 1861, business as such just about ceased to exist. Some of the stores remained open and tried to do business, but it was a losing battle. The federal blockade effectively shut off—with the exception of a few goods brought in by blockade runners—most of the trade between the northern manufacturers, wholesalers, and suppliers and their retail customers in this section. Most trade with other countries also ceased. There is little or no mention in existing records of business or industrial operations during the period of the war. There is one report that business houses throughout the county closed on November 15, 1861, which was set aside as a day of fasting by President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy. An unwanted transaction was reported by a Jamesville mill in September, 1863. Mizell & Waters there still had some shingles on hand at their mill at the time, and a Union gunboat came up the river and spent the better part of a half day loading and carrying them away.

It was several years after the war before things really started moving again. A business directory for 1866-67 listed the following persons and firms as engaged in business in Williamston, although it had nothing about the other towns in the county: J. H. Bell, watch and clock maker; J. H. Ellison, cabinet and coach shop; Wilson G. Lamb (who had returned from the war) a dry goods and grocery business; Andrew J. Lickman, dealer in wines and liquors; Poole & Brothers, druggists; Joseph Tucker, harness maker; and Williams (Abner S.) and Askew, owners of the Williamston Expositor. W. T. Crawford was sheriff and William H. Harrell was clerk of the superior court. There was no mention of C. B. Hassell being in business here at that time, although it is known that he was.

A similar directory for 1867-68 listed not only the merchants in Williamston, but also a number in other towns, all reported to be dealers in "dry goods"; eight in Williamston: Wm. H. Carstarphen, Ewell & Shaw, C. B. Hassell, John R. Lanier, Anson J. Mizell, Wm. W. Purvis, Roberson & Brother, Slade & Biggs; three in Jamesville: H. W. Mizell, John R. Mizell, Wm. W. Moore; and four in Hamilton: E. G. Price, N. H. Sebrell, E. E. Weathersbee, Waldo & Crofton. Henry D. Roberson was listed as a "dry goods" dealer in the "country," probably where Robersonville is now located, since that town was not incorporated until 1870. It is believed the directory missed Wilson G. Lamb's store in 1867-68, as it was still in business in 1869.

At the same time, there were three hotels in the county; two in Williamston, the Campbell House, operated by Wm. B. Campbell, and the Planters' Hotel, J. M. Sitterson, proprietor; and one in Jamesville, the Jamesville Hotel, "Sebrell" being listed as proprietor. There were also eight lawyers in the county then: W. C.

Eborn, G. N. C. Gregory, and Joseph T. Waldo in Hamilton; J. G. Caraway, Joseph J. Martin, J. R. Stubbs, Sam'l W. Watts, and A. S. Williams in Williamston. Hamilton had three physicians: L. C. Coke, John W. Sherrod, and Wm. W. Watts; Williamston had three R. S. Halsey, Thomas C. Pugh, and L. S. Yates; and the address of James L. Teal was given as "country," although two years later his address was Williamston. It was reported on October 19, 1867, that 12-inch shingles were selling for $12 per thousand; and cotton was bringing 12 cents a pound in the county, against 15 to 17 cents in New York.

Two years later, in 1869, the number of persons, firms, and establishments showed an increase in most categories. The number of grocers and general merchants in Williamston went from 8 to 12 in the two years, the additions to the directory being Wilson G. Lamb, general store (whose business was apparently overlooked in the 1867 directory), Andrew J. Lickman, grocer, John H. Tucker, general store, and Mrs. D. B. Whitaker, milliner. The number of merchants in Jamesville went from three to five, with the addition of W. J. Cooper, George M. Bonds, and A. A. Crookstone, and the loss of Wm. W. Moore. Hamilton doubled the number of its merchants, from four to eight; the new ones were Jones & Thompson, Jas. D. Graves, John W. Howell, and B. C. Mayo.

In addition to the above merchants, nine individuals or firms were listed as being engaged in manufacturing in 1869. Those with Williamston addresses were Jas. H. Ellison, J. B. Peal, coach makers; Rhodes & Brother, lumber; James Tucker, harness maker Arthur Anderson, saddle and harness maker; and John Hatton, blacksmith. Two were engaed in the lumber business at Jamesville: martindale, Cruxton & Company, and E. H. Bailey; and one at Hamilton, Francis A. Boyle. The number of physicians in the county was increased by one in 1869, Dr. J. J. Smith being listed as practicing in Jamesville. He was also listed as a local Northern Methodist minister there.

There is no doubt that by 1870 Jamesville had taken over as the industrial center of Martin County. There were 11 mills of various kinds in the section, according to the 1870 census, representing a capital investment of more than half a million dollars. Total value of the products produced in the 11 mills was said to be $84,500 per year. The 240 employees receied a total of $22,300 in wages. It was pointed out in the census report that several mills operated only part time and several others had just been put into operation, and neither their annual wages nor value of products were included in the totals. The list also did not include statistics on the operations of Dennis Simmons, who had a shingle and saw mill at what was later known as Astoria, a short distance up the Roanoke River from Jamesville. Why this mill was not included in the census listings is not known, as it later grew into one of the largest timber operations in the state. What was called the Jamesville area then includes what is now Jamesville, Griffins, and part of Williams Township.

Of the 11 plants listed in the 1870 census, all except two were concerned with producing lumber or shingles. Though it is believed there were more, only one grist mill was listed, that of Hardison & Coltrain, probably in the Farm Life area. It represented an investment of $500 and was operated by water power, estimated at six horsepower, grinding approximately 1,600 bushels into meal annually. The other industry not involving forest products was a blacksmith shop operated by J. R. Bachdre (?), a wheelwright, who had an estimated $600 invested.

The largest operation was that of the Jamesville & Washington Railroad and Lumber Company, then engaged in operating a sizable lumber mill and building its railroad. The first in the county, the line was eventually to be extended to Washington. The firm's investment was estimated to be about $250,000 in 1870. E. H. Bailey, Jamesville postmaster, had the largst individual operation at that time, with a $5,000 investment in a 30-horsepower steam sawmill and a 30-horsepower steam planing mill. His mills had 12 employees and operated full time.

Waters & Bailey had an investment of $1,800 in a 30-horsepower steam sawmill, operating about three months each year and paying out $1,500 in wages. Five other lumber and shingle mills had the name Mizell listed either as operator or as a partner in the firms operating the mills. It is believed there were several different persons named Mizell involved in these mills, although it is possible one Mizell may have been connected with several of them, since no initials are mentioned. The names of the mills were listed in the census as follows: Mizell Lumber Mill, Mizell & Walker, Mizell & Smithwick, Mizell & Waters, and Mizell Shingle Mill.

The firm which was to become Dennis Simmons Lumber Company—one of the largest industrial undertakings in the history of the county, considering the difference in the times, had its beginnings in 1857. Dennis Simmons, a native of Currituck, came to

Martin County in that year and began the manufacture of shingles at a place that was later to be known as Astoria, about a mile above Jamesville on the Roanoke River. It was said that at first up to 300 slaves were used in making the cypress shingles by hand, with machinery replacing the slaves some time later. The firm was first known as Simmons, Davis & Company, but the identity of those associated with Simmons has not been established. When the firm was incorporated in 1891, there was no mention of Davis; Daniel Simmons, a nephew of Dennis, was vice president, and T. W. Tilghman of Wilson was general manager.

The company's shingles became widely known, and when the roof at Mount Vernon was reshingled around 1860, the Simmons-Davis brand was used. Years later, in 1915, the association which maintains Mount Vernon wrote to the local company asking if it could supply more shingles of the same kind, but it had ceased manufacturing them by then and was unable to comply with the request. The original plant was destroyed by fire in 1884. It was rebuilt in 1887 on a much larger scale and was later manufacturing lumber at the rate of 75,000 feet a day, most of it being shipped by water routes to Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The plant was destroyed again by fire on August 18, 1912, but was rebuilt with more modern equipment and resumed operations on February 14, 1913. It later had plants at Elm City, Kenly, and Middlesex, as well as Astoria. The large mill at Astoria closed down in 1919.

The firm was incorporated on November 17, 1891, as Dennis Simmons Lumber Company, with Dennis Simmons as president; Daniel Simmons, vice president; and T. W. Tilghman, general manager. It was capitalized at only $45,000, and the capital stock was never increased, but it became so valuable in later years that at one time the stock was worth $2,500 a share. The firm had extensive timber holdings in Edgecombe, Nash, Johnston, and Wake Counties, in addition to more than 4,500 acres of land in Martin. It also owned a steamship line which provided transportation for the company's products from Astoria to northern points. The line was incorporated as the Roanoke & Tar River Steamboat Company, stockholders being the same as those of the Dennis Simmons Lumber Company. The lumber company's corporation was dissolved in 1939, but a few land transactions took place after that date with former stockholders disposing of property once owned by the firm. Final dissolution was in 1944. At his death in 1902, wealth created by the business up to that time enabled Dennis Simmons to leave $100,000 to the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage and a substantial bequest to Meredith College in Raleigh, in addition to the large property holdings he left to members of his family and descendants of his brothers and sisters.

The first list of water mills operating after the Civil War was given in a North Carolina directory for 1867-68, but it did not report their location. There were eight in the list, as follows: Sherrod's Grist Mill, operated by the estate of R. W. Sherrod; Everett's Grist Mill, operated by Elisha Everett; Ewell & Rawls Grist Mill; Leggett's Grist Mill; Gorham's, operated by George Britton; and three other grist mills, not named, operated by Mr. Woolard, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Daniel, respectively. One water mill was added to the list in 1869, a grist mill operated by Coltrain and Hardison, The same mills were listed in 1872, and the listing for 1877-78 had three additions; a steam grist mill in Hamilton operated by R. A. Brown & Co. a steam sawmill in Williamston operated by John Watts, and a sawmill in Jamesville owned by the Jamesville & Washington Railroad and Lumber Company. The same year, Beveridge's Directory listed W. R. Gladson (Gladstone) as a coach manufacturer in Hamilton. The Tarboro Southerner, in its issue of June 20, 1877, had the following item about the sale of the Watts' Mill: "Dr. R. J. King has bought Capt. John Watts' steam mill, and is using it as a shingle factory, making from 15,000 to 20,000 of the finest shingles we ever saw each day."

Robersonville was chartered in 1870, and four stores were listed there for the first time in the directory of 1877-78, as follows: Theodore Keel, E. B. Roberson, W. W. Roberson & Brother, and Roberson & Outterbridge, all owners of general stores. Williamston had nine general stores: J. D. Biggs & Company, J. R. Ballard & Company, W. H. T. Biggs & Company, J. A. Florsheim & Company, Noah S. Godard, Hadley & Company, Hadley & Phillips, W. Slade, and Mrs. Courtney Williams & Company. In addition, there were G. W. Andrews, confectionary; Eli Askew, dealer in liquor; W. T. Crawford, grocery; Gurganus & Company, and William B. Williams, grocery and liquor. Stores in Hamilton were: M. A. Boyle, H. Brown & Company, J. L. Barnhill & Company, B. L. Long, D. W. Lewis, Martin & Everett, R. H. Salsbury & Company, N. Whitehurst & Company, general stores; J. W. Sherrod & Brother, cotton factors and general store; and J. G. Carraway, saloon. Jamesville had the following: Francis Lightfoot, H. W. Mizell, Alfred Mizell, J. & W. Railroad and Lumber

Co., G. D. Rogerson & Son, Wm. L. Stalling & Company, general stores; L. J. Cooper & Brother, and Willis P. Moore, grocery stores; J. R. Hardison, grocery and liquor; Crookstown & Smith, shingles and general store; and Mizell & Walker, shingles.

The coming of the railroad to Jamesville certainly increased the number of hotels there. There were only three in the whole county in 1872, one each at Williamston, Hamilton, and Jamesville. The business directory for 1877-78 listed one each for Williamston and Hamilton, and four for Jamesville, although one of the latter was probably located at Dymond City, about seven or eight miles from Jamesville. The proprietor of the hotel at Hamilton was Mrs. M. A. Boyle; the Planters' Hotel in Williamston was operated by J. M. Sitterson; and the four at Jamesville were managed by H. S. Cooper, G. D. Rodgerson, W. P. Moore, and the railroad company, the last named undoubtedly being the one at Dymond City built and operated for several years by the Jamesville & Washington Railroad & Lumber Company. The county had lost several lawyers, whose number dropped from seven in 1872 to only four in 1877-78: Henry P. Pugh, James E. Moore, and J. J. Martin, Williamston, and Joseph T. Waldo, Hamilton.

The number of physicians increased during the same period, from eight in 1872 to eleven in 1877-78. Actually seven new physicians began practicing in the county during the intervening period, as four of those practicing in 1872 were not listed in 1877-78. The seven new doctors who came into the county were D. W. Lewis and W. R. Carson, Hamilton; F. M. Morgan, Jamesville; Thomas Watson, Robersonville; A. Hassell, J. Taylor, and J. M. Murrell, Williamston. The four doctors who were practicing in both 1872 and 1877-78 were L. C. Coke and Wm. W. Watts, Hamilton; R. S. Halsey and L. S. Yates, Williamston. The four who were practicing in 1872 but not in 1877-78 were John W. Sherrod, Hamilton; J. J. Smith, Jamesville; Thomas C. Pugh and James L. Teal, Williamston.

The census of 1880 provided more information about industry in the county than was available for earlier years. There were fourteen industrial establishments at that time, including seven sawmills, five flour and grist mills, one cotton gin, and one combination saw and grist mill. Seven of the nine townships had one or more plants (Bear Grass and Cross Roads had none, and Poplar Point had not been established at that time). Griffins was the leader with four—two at Dymond City—Williamston

Township had three, Hamilton, Jamesville, and Robersonville Townships had two each, and Williams and Goose Nest one each.

The census report, in addition to giving the name and type of plant, reported capital invested, number of employees, hours in work day, average wages for skilled and ordinary labor, total annual wages paid, and value of product. Following is the report by townships on the individual plants:

Jamesville Township: Dennis Simmons Sawmill; capital invested, $5,000; number employees, 10; workday, 10 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.50, unskilled 70 cents; total annual wages paid, $2,000; value of product, $5,200; logs procured in Roanoke River area. Lightfoot & Schultz, sawmill; capital invested $3,000; number employed, 3; workday, 10 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.25, unskilled 60 cents; total wages, $100; value of product, $365; logs procured in Gardner's Creek area. This mill evidently had been in operation but a short time when the census was taken.

Williams Township: Chatham Mills, saw and grist mill; capital invested, $4,000; number employed, 3; workday, 10 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.50, unskilled 50 cents; total wages paid, $450; value of product, not given.

Griffins Township: Jamesville & Washington Railroad & Lumber Company, sawmill; capital invested $20,000; number employed, 10; workday, 11 hours; daily wages, skilled $2, unskilled 75 cents; total wages paid, $3,191; value of product, $6,619; this was the largest industrial undertaking in the county at that time. The same firm was listed separately as owning a flour and grist mill; capital invested, $1,000; number employed, 1; workday, 11 hours; daily wages, skilled mechanic $1, unskilled 75 cents, when used; total wages paid, $60; value of product, $770. Kader Lilley, sawmill; capital invested, $1,500; number employed, 3; workday, 12 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.50, unskilled 40 cents; total wages paid, $300; value of product, $2,400. David Hardison, flour and grist mill; capital invested, $3,000; number employed 21; daily wages, skilled $1, unskilled 75 cents; total wages paid, $100; value of product, $5,192.

Williamston Township: John Watts, sawmill; capital invested, $5,000; number employed, 8; workday, 12 hours; daily wages, skilled $2, unskilled 75 cents; total wages paid, $1,000; value of product, $5,000. Mobley & Taylor, flour and grist mill; capital invested, $4,000; number employed, 2; workday, 12 hours; daily wages, not reported; total wages paid, $180; value of product, $1,300; the mill was said to be located on Beaver Dam.

Robersonville Township: Henry D. Roberson, sawmill; capital invested, $2,000; number employed, 3; workday, 12 hours; daily wages, skilled $2, unskilled 75 cents; total wages paid, $150; value of product, $590. The same man, Henry D. Roberson, was listed separately as owner of a flour and grist mill; capital invested $1,500; number employed, 3; workday, 11 hours; daily wages, skilled $2, unskilled 75 cents; total wages paid, $600; value of product, $83,160. This latter figure was so far out of line with all other items in the census report that the enumerator had a question mark (?) following it.

Hamilton Township: Salsbury & Howell, sawmill; capital invested, $2,000; number employed, 3; workday, 10 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.80, unskilled 60 cents; total wages paid, $300; value of product, $1,290. J. P. Boyle, cotton gin; capital invested, $1,000; number employed, 3; hours worked and average daily wages not given; total wages paid, $250; value of product, $700.

Goose Nest Township: Hyman & Harrell, sawmill; capital invested, $600; number employed, 4; workday, 11 hours; daily wages, skilled $1.25, unskilled 50 cents; total wages paid, $435; value of product, $1,580.

The number of retail merchants and businessmen had increaed sizably by 1883, when there were 73. Hamilton, with 25, had the most, followed by Williamston with 23; Jamesville, 16; Robersonville, 7; and Dymond City, 2.

Those with Hamilton addresses were: G. W. Pritchard, B. C. Purvis, J. E. Roberson & Brother, all grocers; Mrs. A. E. Hooker, dealer in wines and liquors; Jas. A. Whitley, druggist; R. E. Weathersbee, stoves and tinware; H. Brown & Co., Brown & Pritchard, W. J. Clary, J. W. Coburn & Co., L. C. Coke, M. J. Gardner, R. H. Gardner, W. E. Gladson (Gladstone), H. A. Haislip, W. A. Haislip, D. W. Lewis, Mobley & Taylor, Salsbury Brothers, R. B. Salsbury & Co., R. H. Salsbury, W. L. Sherrod & Brother, Slade, Jones & Co., S. H. Spruill, Whitley & Everett, and Williams & Gilligan, all general merchants.

The Williamston list included: S. R. Biggs, druggist; Mobley & Williams, grocers; J. A. Roberson, grocery and liquors; Mrs. J. S. Sitterson, millinery; B. B. Watts Co., watchmaker and jewelry; A. R. Rogerson, dealer in wines and liquors; J. A. Andrews, J. D. Biggs & Co., W. H. Carstarphen, J. W. Davenort & Co., S. P. Everett, N. S. Godard, Gurganus & Peal, Hassell & Burroughs, Kader Lilley, J. J. Martin, James E. Moore, Peal & Groves, W. L. Riddick & Co., J. R. Roberson, William Slade, B. B. Watts & Co., and W. B. Williams, all general merchants.

Retail dealers in Jamesville were: S. L. Wallace & Co., fertilizers; R. P. Mann, grocer; J. D. Rogerson, grocery and liquors; R. D. Styons, millinery; Thomas Gardner, Edward Simmons, saloons; J. B. Butler, Coltrain & Bateman, J. F. Hardison, W. C. Hassell & Co., A. Mizell, H. W. Mizell, W. P. Moore, J. T. Pettifourd, R. P. Powers, S. H. Spruill, S. L. Wallace & Co., and J. A. Ward & Brother, all general merchants. Those in Robersonville were: James A. Coburn, Daniel & Hargrove, W. T. Outterbridge, George O. Roberson, H. D. Roberson & Son, H. Winfield, and J. J. Winfield, all general merchants. Dymond City listed two dealers in general merchandise: Jamesville & Washington Railroad & Lumber Co. and David Hardison & Son.

In addition to his general store in Jamesville, in 1883, H. W. Mizell was also listed as operator of a fishery, and Gladson & Pritchard were coach and wagon makers at Hamilton. Dymond City was the home address of artisans and specialists of several kinds, listed as follows: J. D. Hill and Moses Hill, blacksmiths and wheelwrights; Joseph E. Lordley and Nelson Waters, carpenters and builders; Andrew Lordley and J. E. Lordley, house and sign painters; Henry Ryan, cattle dealer; Josephine Walker, owner of a private school, and Noah T. Robertson, proprietor of a whiskey distillery. There were six post offices in the county at that time: Dymond City, Hamilton, Jamesville, Robersonville, Williamston, and Wilsonville, the name of the last being changed to Everetts the following year.

The first cleaning and pressing business was started in the county about the year 1883 and operated by Sabrina Hassell, wife of a former slave, Peter Hassell, in Williamston. It was operated at their home on the old road to Hamilton, about where the old York residence is now located on Simmons Avenue. It was started primarily to take care of the stiff-bosomed white shirts popular among the elite of that period, and many of the customers were considered to be fops or dandies by other people. It was said that the proprietors had one price for everything, 30 cents, whether the quantity was large or small, and she had a practical monopoly on that type of business for a number of years.

It was about this time that the most devastating fire to hit the business section of Williamston during the entire 19th century occurred in the early morning hours of December 8, 1883. As near as can be determined, about fifteen stores, the post office, and an oyster stand were destroyed, the losses approximating $80,000, with only about $17,260 covered by insurance. Eleven of the twenty property owners affected (some of the buildings were not owned by the occupants) had no insurance at all, and only a few were said to be fully protected. News of the fire spread throughout the section, and the old Albemarle & Raleigh Railroad ran a special train from Tarboro to Williamston the following Sunday to give excursionists a chance to see the ruins.

It is believed the fire started in the William Slade store, which was located on the north side of Main Street just to the east of the lot on which the Branch Banking & Trust Company now stands. It swept on down the street on that side to Smithwick, but jumped across to the south side of Main on the way down and destroyed several buildings there. The Tarboro Southerner, in its issue of December 13, 1883, despite a number of known inaccuracies, had perhaps the best account now available of the big fire. After stating that the fire was discovered about 12:10 a.m. on December 8, the story continued as follows, under the heading, "Incinerated Williamston":

"People rushed to the scene, each bent upon doing something to prevent a conflagration, each acknowledging no authority but his own, and at first most of the efforts were misdirected. Soon, however, James Edwin Moore was made chief of the fire brigade, and then began a battle with the flames, which was manfully kept up until the fire was under control, but when this was done the fire had devoured fifteen stores, the post office, and an oyster stand.

"To add to the confusion, 35 minutes after the fire in town was discovered, the steamer 'Commerce' of the Roanoke, Norfolk & Baltimore Steam Navigation Company was found to be on fire. Efforts to save her were ineffectual. She had to be cut loose from her wharf, where she was anchored, and allowed to drift down the stream until she sank.

"Losses and insurance on the business property were as follows:

"William Slade, general merchandise, store and stock, loss $11,000; insurance, $1,000; Peel & Groves, general merchandise, store and stock, loss $7,000, insurance $500; B. B. Watts & Company, general merchandise, store and stock, loss $8,000, insurance $3,700; N. S. Godard, store and stock of general merchandise, $8,000, no insurance; Peel & Gurganus, store and stock of general merchandise and liquors, loss $2,500, no insurance; James A. Robertson, store and stock of general merchandise and liquors, $6,500, no insurance; W. H. Robertson & Brother, stock of liquors, $500, no insurance; the building, belonging to James R. Robertson, loss $1,000, no insurance;

"James A. Robertson, general merchandise, stock loss $1,000, no insurance; store property of A. R. Rogerson, loss $2,000, no insurance; A. R. Rogerson, store and stock of liquors and so forth, loss $7,000, no insurance; J. D. Biggs & Company, store and stock of general merchandise, loss $16,000, insurance $3,500; Cushing B. Hassell, stock of general merchandise, loss $5,000, insurance $1,500; Mrs. C. B. Hassell, store occupied by her son, loss $3,000, no insurance; Mrs. C. B. Hassell, three other buildings, loss $2,000, no insurance; J. W. Davenport, general merchandise stock, loss $4,000, fully covered by insurance; Marion Burroughs, store occupied by Davenport & Company, $2,500 loss, $560 insurance; S. R. Biggs, stock of drugs, $1,000 loss, fully covered by insurance; Biggs & Hassell, store occupied by S. R. Biggs, $1,000 loss, fully covered by insurance; Thomas A. Dean, liquors, stock and so forth, $500 loss, no insurance."

Among individuals and business firms advertising in the Williamston Echo on October 15, 1886, were the following: N. Mobley, dry goods, groceries, and shoes; C. B. Hassell, dry goods and groceries; L. H. Howell, plain and fancy groceries, wines, and liquors, at A. R. Rogerson's old stand; B. B. Watts & Company, general merchandise and groceries; William Slade, general merchandise; Everett & Godard (Jos. H. Everett and Jos. G. Godard), dry goods, notions, groceries, wines and liquors (the firm also operated a billiard parlor);

Also Biggs & Davenport (John D. Biggs and John W. Davenport), dry goods, groceries, hardware and farming utensils, including Cox cotton planters; W. S. Godard, dry goods, groceries and notions; W. T. Ward & Company, groceries, liquors, and tobacco; P. Ewell, watchmaker and jeweler; S. R. Biggs, druggist. All of the above were located in Williamston. Other businesses in the county at that time were: J. S. Tripp, Robersonville, groceries, crockery, and tobacco; J. C. Hoard & Co., Hamilton, carriage factory and burial cases; Roberson & Parker, Robersonville, manufacturers of carriages, side-bar buggies, phaetons, road carts, sulkies, one and two horse wagons, dump carts and drays; W. H. Hardison & Co., Robersonville, patent medicines; J.K. Ross

& Brother, groceries, liquors, and tobacco, also of Robersonville.

The 1880 census listed about a dozen mills in the county, but did not indicate whether they were operated by steam or water power. Undoubtedly there were some of both. Lumber mills were operated in the Jamesville area by Dennis Simmons Lumber Company and Lightfoot & Schultz; James Harding and David Hardison were flour mill operators in the Dymond City section; and Kader Lilley had a cotton gin and a lumber and grist mill operation in Griffins Township. Mobley and Taylor had a flour mill, and John Watts and Chatham Mills were operators of lumber plants in Williamston Township. Henry Roberson was proprietor of flour and lumber mills in Robersonville; J. P. Boyle had a cotton gin and Salsbury & Howell a lumber mill in Hamilton; and Hyman & Hewitt operated a lumber mill in Goose Nest Township.

The business that was to have the longest history as a retail establishment in Martin County was started in 1887 by T. B. Slade, Sr., and D. J. Jones in Hamilton. It later came under the ownership and direction of William S. Rhodes and D. G. Matthews and continued operations as Slade, Rhodes & Company until January 1, 1970, when the manager at that time, LeRoy Everett, announced the firm would make no more retail sales. With an 83-year history, the store is reputed to have been the largest retail farm supply outlet ever to operate in the county. Mr. Rhodes was associated with the firm for 49 years; and Mr. Matthews was with it for 56 years, first as a clerk and later as a co-owner and manager with Mr. Rhodes.

Hamilton was the center of a large lumber mill operation in the late 1800's and 1890's, according to articles in the Scotland Neck and Tarboro newspapers in the spring of 1888. Frank Hitch, a former Pennsylvanian, had built a large sawmill plant at Hamilton about two years previously and extended his logging railroad from the mill to Tarboro, operating it for a time as a common carrier. In March, 1888 he arranged for a free excursion trip to the plant, inviting a group of representative citizens of the Tarboro section—including the two editors, who later published laudatory articles in their newspapers about the trip.

According to the editors, "79 of Tarboro's best, biggest, and most influential citizens" were on the trip, the train consisting of a Pullman parlor car, "a simon-pure vestibule" (plus day coach, with enclosed entrances), observation cars, and "an extensive provision department." This latter, the articles reported, "was the prime favorite with the excursionists, as were the caterer plenipotentiary, Captain Haywood Clark, and fluid furnisher, Major Faison Calvert."

The "handsome little railroad," as described by one of the writers, made a round trip daily between Hamilton and Tarboro for passengers and four trips for logs, bringing about 75 of the latter to the mill each trip. The mill itself had a daily capacity of 50,000 board feet of lumber and was said to be cutting about 35,000 feet per day at the time the articles were written. Each of a number of saws was said to be capable of cutting 100 to 150 feet per minute, regarded as astounding by the writers. Every foot of lumber was sawed into even lengths by machinery, sorted by hand, and mechanically transported to the six dry kilns. It was also said that every particle of sawdust, every single slab, and even the smallest strips and bark were ground up by machinery and utilized as fuel for supplying the mill with steam. The plant operated nine boilers with a total capacity of 100 horsepower. More than 60 employees were required to operate the establishment, the payroll being estimated at $150 to $200 per day; the total investment was reported to be more than $25,000. It was said to be one of the largest and most modern industrial plants in eastern North Carolina at that time.

There was a sizable increase in the number of merchants and tradesmen in the county by 1890, a business directory for that year listing the following: Dymond City: J. R. Coltrain, H. P. Nolan, general stores; Augustus Johnston, livery stable; Andrew and J. E. Sordley, painters; Goose Nest: John T. Hyman, general store; Hamilton: Davenport & Taylor, Everett & Baker, J. K. Parker, Pittman & Weeks, S. L. Pritchard, R. H. Salsbury, A. Sherrod, general stores; Anthony & Bryan, livery stable; J. T. Bland, E. C. Edmondson, wines and liquors; Bryan & Robertson, drugs; Chamberlain & Rawles, jewelers; P. T. Harrell, saloon; J. B. Hooker, grocery and liquors, livery stable; Stanley Jones, shoemaker; J. H. Venters, blacksmith; James T. Waldo, real estate dealer; Mrs. H. M. Watts, Mrs. J. R. Williams, millinery; Mr. Banks, railroad agent; Slade, Jones & Co., agent for Roanoke, Norfolk & Baltimore Steamship Company; R. H. Salsbury, agent, Norfolk & Southern Railroad Company (boat line); Dr. D. W. Lewis, shingles and lumber;

Jamesville: J. P. Butler, C. C. Coltrain & Company, W. C. Hassell, W. P. Moore, G. A. Owens, P. Shepherd & Company, S. H. Spruill, C. C. Stallings & Company, S. L. Wallace, general stores; Hardy Knight, W. P. Moore, grocery stores; Robersonville: J. A.

Coburn, M. Everett & Brother, W. H. Hardison & Company, G. S. James, W. E. Page & Company, J. K. Ross & Brother, R. T. Taylor, J. S. Trepp, Wynn & Everett, general stores;

Williamston: H. E. Biggs & Company, Biggs & Davenport, W. H. Carstarphen, G. Godard, Hassell & Rogers, E. W. Hassell, Kader Lilley, J. H. Peal, A. M. Riddick, J. R. Roberson, William Slade, L. Williams & Company, general stores; M. W. Ballard & Company, Joseph G. Godard, groceries and liquors; S. R. Biggs, W. T. Ward & Company, druggists; J. K. Carstarphen, groceries and butcher; J. E. Cooke, painter; Mrs. J. T. Deans, Mrs. J. M. Sitterson, Miss H. Lloyd, Mrs. N. V. Parish, millinery; J. H. Ellison, undertaker; W. A. Ellison, railroad and express agent; J. L. Ewell, general insurance; Philander Ewell, jeweler; S. H. Newberry, livery stable; and I. Wawalt, shoemaker.

The 1890 list of manufacturing establishments in the county was as follows: blacksmithing and wheelwrighting; J. D. Hill, Moses Hill, Dymond City; J. H. Hatton, Williamston; building and contracting; J. E. Sordley, Nelson Waters, Dymond City; coaches: J. C. Hoard, Hamilton; J. G. Swain, J. H. Ellison, Williamston; lumber and shingles: J. D. Biggs & Company, B. R. Whitley, Dennis Simmons Lumber Company (office), C. W. Grandy & Company, Williamston.

Mills operating in the county during 1890 included the following: Robersonville; Joseph Wynne, corn mill; Roberson & Brother, cotton gin, steam corn and lumber mill; Williamston: Hardison & Son, J. V. Green, J. S. Green, George Britton, H. A. Coltrain, Mobley & Taylor, flour and corn mills; L. B. James & Company, R. H. Rogerson, Bryan Wynn, J. L. Ward, Kader Lilley, J. L. Roberson, Dennis Simmons, John D. Biggs, steam lumber mills; Dymond City: D. Hardison & Son, W. H. Daniel, flour, corn and lumber mills; Hamilton, a steam lumber mill owned by Frank Hitch; and a steam lumber and shingle mill owned by Whidbee & Dickinson of Baltimore.

It was around 1890 that Frank Hitch began making additions and improvements to his mill at Hamilton. A correspondent for the Scotland Neck newspaper reported in May, 1890, that A. R. McGarkin and E. E. Thomas, two workmen from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, were there to install some band and gang saw equipment for the big mill. In July of the same year it was reported that other additions were being made to the mill, which at that time had nine dry kilns and a double lumber shed 75 yards long. It was said that the only workman exposed to the elements at that time was the logger.

Martin County Lumber Company was operating in this county in 1891, according to an entry in the papers of William Henry Bennett, former register of deeds and son of Bryant Bennett, prominent merchant and business man of Hamilton of the middle 1800's. Young Bennett was register of deeds for six years, from December, 1882, until December, 1888. The Martin County Lumber Company was listed as an Everetts firm dealing in "sawed and dressed lumber" during the 1890's. A firm with a somewhat similar name, Martin County Timber Company, Williamston, N. C., was chartered in 1907, but this was an entirely different organization.

Possibly there were barbers in Martin County prior to 1894, but so far as can be learned the first mention of that trade is contained in an advertisement of J. H. Lassiter, "tonsorial artist," in the Martin County Sun of September 7, 1894. His shop was located on Main Street in Williamston at that time. J. R. Mobley rebuilt a number of brick stores on Washington Street, Williamston, during the early part of 1897, after a fire destroyed the frame buildings there the preceding winter. Part of that street was formerly called Brogden, and the area was later facetiously referred to as "Graball." The firm of W. C. Proctor & Company operated an ice house in Williamston in May, 1897.

Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1897 listed a number of merchants and tradesmen in various localities throughout the county just prior to the turn of the century: W. T. Broughton & Company and Waters & Barden were operating general stores in Dardens (the first time that post office was mentioned). That Dymond City was on its way out is seen by the fact that there was only one merchant listed, H. P. Nolan, who ran a general store there. Dymond City still had two contractors and builders, however: Nelson Waters and J. E. Lordly. There were five general stores in Everetts: W. S. Barnhill, Barnhill & James, W. B. Clark, W. H. Clark, and L. B. Wynne. There were three in Gold Point: Coburn & Roberson, B. L. Johnson & Company, and J. E. Roberson & Son.

Continuing the 1897 listing of merchants and tradesmen in the county, there were four individuals and firms operating general stores in Goose Nest: R. K. Gladstone & Brother, H. K. Harrell, S. H. Ross, and W. B. Ross. The Hamilton listing was as follows: Sherrod (A.) & Baker (C. K.), B. B. Sherrod, Slade, Jones & Co., O.

T. Thompson, M. Thompson, M. Thompson, general stores; McG. Cherry, shoemaker; F. L. Gladstone, grocer; D. C. Jones, livery stable; Dr. B. L. Long, and F. H. Robertson drugs. Hassell had three general stores: G. L. Cooper & Son, H. A. Nicholson, and Mrs. A. E. Salsbury. There was a large listing in Jamesville: J. B. Allen & Co., T. A. Berry, L. M. Brown, H. M. Burras, W. W. Clark, J. W. Collopy, G. F. Cooper, R. H. Gainer, S. A. Hamilton, J. L. Johnson, G. L. Kemp, W. B. Lilly, L. A. Mann, R. P. Mann, Owens & Co., M. F. Parker, G. M. Peele & Brother, R. J. Peel, Price, Kemp & Son, H. T. Stallings, N. S. Stallings, W. L. Stallings, W. W. Vaughan, S. L. Wallace, Mrs. Mary A. M. Ward, general stores; J. R. Ellison, railroad agent; Hassell & Co., general store and fish; and Dr. W. R. Mays, drugs.

The Parmele listings for 1897 were: Andrews & Purvis, J. C. Andrews, A. L. Bellflower, W. H. Harper, Gaynor & Peele, W. M. Jones & Co., Parmele Commissary Co., D. S. Powell & Co., W. M. Powell, Bryant Purvis & Co., general stores; Parmele-Eccleston Lumber Co., lumber; and Thomas Whitley, confectioner. Retail merchants in Robersonville were: M. Everett, W. A. Everett, N. H. Hardison, Hardison & Co., W. D. Keel, Mrs. M. R. Peel & Co., A. G. Roberson & Co., G. D. Roberson, G. E. & J. C. Roberson, J. E. Roberson & Son, M. A. Roberson, H. Ross & Co., S. L. Ross, S. G. Taylor, R. T. Taylor, general stores; Dr. R. H. Hargrove, drugs; and Mrs. H. B. Roberson, millinery.

The 1897 listings for Williamston were as follows: J. W. Anderson & Brother, M. W. Ballard, Blount & Brother, C. D. Carstarphen & Co., J. B. Cherry, M. B. Daws, Jos. G. Godard & Brother, Godwin & Robertson, W. E. Griffin, Gurganus & Crawford, F. K. Hodges, J. D. Leggett, W. H. Leggett, Kader Lilley, A. J. Mizell, Powell & Clark, B. B. Watts & Co., general stores; S. R. Biggs, drugs; J. L. Ewell, hay and grain; P. Ewell, jeweler; W. H. Hassell and A. Johnson, livery stables.

Manufacturing establishments in the county in 1897 were listed as follows: J. H. Hatton, blacksmith and wheelwright, Williamston; R. L. Roberson, carriages, Robersonville; Slade, Jones & company, coaches, Hamilton; J. P. Boyle Manufacturing Company, Hamilton, cypress shingles, elm hoops, and lumber; Dennis Simmons Lumber Company, Williamston, lumber and shingles; B. R. Whitley, Williamston, lumber and shingles; North State Lumber Company, Parmele, sawed and dressed lumber; Martin County Lumber Company, Everetts, sawed and dressed lumber; Godwin & Roberson, Williamston, shingles and lumber.

Corn and flour mills were operated in the Williamston area in 1897 by J. L. Robertson, H. A. Coltrain, Mobley & Taylor; a flour, corn and sawmill was operated at Dymond City by W. H. Daniel; a cotton gin, corn and sawmill was operated in Robersonville by M. A. Roberson; steam sawmills in Williamston by R. H. Rogerson, Kader Lilley, and M. Burroughs; steam sawmills in Everetts by M. L. James and Henry Wynn; a water grist mill in Everetts by John R. Leggett; a steam sawmill in Jamesville by W. L. Stallings; and a water grist and sawmill in Jamesville by F. B. Hardison. Also in operation about that time was the plant of Martin & Biggs, "Manufacturers of Cheap Bedsteads in Poplar, Ash and Oak," according to its letterhead. It was located in Williamston.

Near the top among the larger industrial operations in Martin County just before the end of the 19th century was the plant of the Parmele-Eccleston Lumber Company at Parmele, which began operations around 1890. It generated its own electric power, used mostly for lighting; and it is regarded as fairly certain that the first electric lights in the county were furnished to citizens of that railroad junction town by the lumber plant. C. J. Cherry, a Washington County native, managed the operaiton; and after the plant was closed between 1900 and 1910, he moved to Georgetown, S. C., where he became a multi-millionaire before his death in the early 1930's. One of the largest mercantile businesses in the county was the commissary operated by the Parmele-Eccleston Lumber Company in Parmele about that time, value of its stock being estimated at $30,000 or more at the peak of its activity.

While it is impossible to obtain the names and types of business of every person engaged in commerce and industry in Martin County during the 1800's, a substantial list has been compiled from the papers of Bryant Bennett, prominent merchant and farmer of Hamilton, who died around the turn of the century. The collection, now in the Duke University Library at Durham, includes statements, receipts, letters, account books, notes, legal documents, and various other items of written material concerning people engaged in various types of business during the final third of the 19th century. The papers were combed thoroughly to obtain names of those engaged in merchandising or operation of mills or manufacturing plants in all parts of the county during the period from 1869 through 1896.

The information secured from the Bennett papers contains some duplications of names of individuls or firms obtained from the yearbooks previously cited. Nevertheless, the entire list follows, including names, types of business or occupation, and the year the information was dated, arranged by post office addresses:

Dardens:

W. T. Broughton & Co., general merchant, 1896; Waters & Barden, general merchants, 1896;

Dymond City:

J. R. Coltrain, general merchant, 1890; Aug. Johnston (col.), livery stable, 1890; H. P. Nolan, general merchandise, 1890, 1896; Henry Ryan, livestock, 1884; W. H. Daniel, grist and sawmill, 1884, 1890, 1896; D. Hardison & Son, grist and sawmill, 1884, 1890; Jamesville & Washington Railroad & Lumber Co., grist and sawmill, 1884 (also listed as general merchandise dealer and sawmill operator in Jamesville in 1877); J. D. Hill and Moses Hill, blacksmiths and wheelwrights, 1884, 1890; J. E. Lordley, building contractor, 1884, 1890, 1896; H. W. Mizell, lumber and shingles, 1884; N. T. Roberson, distillery, 1884; Nelson Waters, builder and contractor, 1884, 1890, 1896;

Everetts:

Barnhill & James, W. S. Barnhill, W. H. Clark, W. B. Clark, all listed as individual dealers in general merchandise in the year 1896; Martin Lumber Co., dealer in dressed lumber, 1896; M. L. James, sawmill (steam), 1896; John H. Leggett, grist mill (water), 1896; Henry Wynn, sawmill (steam), 1896;

Gold Point:

Coburn & Roberson, B. L. Johnson & Co., J. E. Roberson & Son, all dealers in general merchandise, 1896;

Goose Nest (Oak City):

Four individuals were listed in Goose Nest (the post office later became Oak City) as dealers in general merchandise: John T. Hyman in 1890, and three others in 1896, as follows: H. K. Harrell,

S. H. Ross, and W. B. Ross (other business or manufacturing firms in this area possibly were listed through the Hamilton post office),

Hamilton:

Anthony & Bryan, livery stable, 1890; J. T. Bond, wines and liquors, 1890; ———Banks, depot agent and merchant, 1890; J. L. Barnhill & Co., general merchandise, 1877; Boyle & Watts, millinery, 1884; Francis A. Boyle, lumber, 1869, 1872, 1877; M. A. Boyle, general merchandise, 1877; Brown & Pritchard, general merchandise, 1884; H. Brown & Co., general merchandise, 1877, 1884; Bryant & Robertson, drugs, 1890; J. G. Carraway, saloon, 1877; Chamberlain & Rawles, jewelers, 1890; McG. Cherry, shoemaker, 1896; W. J. Cherry, general merchandise, 1884; J. W. Coburn & Co., general merchandise, 1884; L. C. Coke, general merchandise, 1884; Davenport & Taylor, general merchandise and agent for steamer "Lucy," 1890; E. C. Edmondson, wines and liquors, 1890; Everett & Baker, 1890; M. J. Gardner, 1884, R. H. Gardner, 1884, all general merchandise dealers; F. L. Gladstone, grocer, 1896; W. E. Gladston (Gladstone), general merchandise, 1884 (in 1890 listed as commercial traveler); James D. Graves, 1869-1872, H. A. Haislip, 1884, W. A. Haislip, 1884, all three dealers in general merchandise; P. T. Harrell, saloon, 1890; Mrs. A. E. Hooker, wines and liquors, 1884; Hooker & Hyman, general merchandise, 1884; J. B. Hooker, grocery and liquor, 1890 (listed as operator of livery stable, 1884); John W. Howell, 1869-1872, Jones & Thompson, 1869-1872, both general merchants; D. C. Jones, livery, 1896; Stanley Jones, shoemaker, 1890; (Dr.) D. W. Lewis, general merchant, 1877, 1884 (listed as physician in 1877-1896 and as druggist in 1896); Martin & Everett, 1877, B. C. Mayo, 1869, 1872, Mobley & Taylor, 1884, J. K. Parker, 1890, Pittman & Weeks, 1890, George Powell, 1884, E. G. Price, 1869, 1872, G. W. Pritchard, 1884, S. L. Pritchard, 1890, all general merchants;

W. H. Pritchard, 1884, B. C. Purvis, 1884, J. E. Roberson & Brother, 1884, all three dealers in groceries; F. H. Robertson, drugs, 1896; Salsbury Brothers, 1884, R. B. Salsbury & Co., 1884, R. H. Salsbury, 1877, 1884 (also agent for boat line of N. S. R R. Co. in 1890), N. H. Sebrell, 1869, 1872, A. Sherrod, 1890, A. Sherrod & Baker, 1896, B. B. Sherrod, 1896, J. W. Sherrod & Brother, 1877, 1884, all dealers in general merchandise; Slade, Jones & Co., general merchandise, 1884 (also agent for Roanoke, Baltimore & Norfolk Steamship Co. in 1890); M. Thompson (col.), grocer, 1896; O. T. Thompson, general merchant, 1896; J. H. Ventress, blacksmith, 1890; Waldo & Crofton, general merchandise, 1869, 1872; James T. Waldo, real estate, 1890; Mrs. H. M. Watts, milliner, 1890; R. E. Weathersbee, 1869, 1872 (also listed as hardware dealer in 1884), N. Whitehurst & Co., 1877, Whitley & Purvis, 1884, all general merchants; J. A. Whitley, dealer in drugs and general merchandise, 1884; Williams & Gilligan, general merchandise, 1884; Mrs. J. R. Williams, millinery, 1890;

J. P. Boyle, grist and sawmill, 1869, 1872 (also listed as manufacturer of shingles and lumber, 1896); Mrs. Mary A. Boyle, manufacturer of shingles and lumber, 1877; Boyle Manufacturing Co., cypress shingles and elm hoops, 1896; J. G. Carraway, maker of coaches, 1884; R. H. Everett, manufacturer of lumber and shingles, 1884; Gladstone & Pritchard, 1884; J. C. Hand, 1884, Slade, Jones & Co., 1896, all manufacturers of coaches; G. L. Pritchard, blacksmith and wheelwright, 1884; R. A. Brown, (steam) grist mill, 1877; W. A. Haislip, grist mill, 1884; Frank Hitch, sawmill (steam), 1890; L. A. Thompson, grist mill, 1884; Whidbee & Dickinson of Baltimore, shingles and sawmill (steam), 1890;

Hassell:

Three firms were listed in Hassell in 1896, all dealers in general merchandise, as follows: G. L. Cooper & Son, H. A. Nicholson, and Mrs. A.E. Salsbury;

Jamesville:

J.B. Allen & Co., general merchandise, 1896; E.H. Bailey, manufacturer of lumber, operator of [steam] sawmill, 1869, 1872, 1877; J.B. Bateman, 1884, T.A. Berry, 1896, L.M. Brown, 1896, George M. Bonds, 1869, 1872, 1877, H.M. Burras, 1896, J.B. Butler, 1884 [also headmaster of school in 1890], W. W. Clark, 1896, J. W. Collopy, 1896, Coltrain & Bateman, 1884, C.C. Coltrain & Co., 1890, G.F. Cooper, 1896, all general merchants; W.J. Cooper, grocer, 1869, 1872, 1877; A.A. Crookston, 1869, 1872, Crookston & Smith, 1877, both general merchants;

J.R. Ellison, railroad agent, 1896; R.H. Gainer, general merchant, 1896; Thomas Gardner, liquor and general merchandise, 1884; S.A. Hamilton, 1896, J.F. Hardison, 1884, both general merchants; J.R. Hardison, grocery, 1877; Hassell & Co., dealer in fish and general merchandise, 1896; W.C. Hassell & Co., 1884, J.L. Johnston, 1896, G.L. Kemp, 1896, general merchants; Hardy Knight [col.], grocery, 1890; Francis Lightfoot, general merchant and sawmill operator, 1877; R.R. Lilley, 1884, W.B. Lilley, 1896, L.A. Mann [col.], 1896, general merchants; Dr. W.R. Mayo, drugs [also listed as physician], 1896; Alfred Mizell, general merchant, 1877, 1884;

Mizell & Walker, manufacturer of shingles, 1877; H. W. Mizell, 1869, 1872, 1877, 1884, John R. Mizell, 1869, 1872, 1877, W.P. Moore [col.], 1884, 1890, all general merchants; Willis P. Moore, grocery, 1877; Owens & Co., 1896, G.A. Owens, 1890, both general merchants; M.F. Parker, grocer, 1896; M.G. Peele & Bro., 1896, R.-J. Peel, 1896, J.T. Pettiford [col.], 1884, R.P. Powers, 1884, Kemp Price & Son, 1896, G.D. Rogerson & Son, 1877, all general merchants; J.D. Rogerson, groceries and liquors, 1884; P. Shepard & Co., general merchandise, 1884, 1890; Edward Simmons, saloon, 1884; S.H. Spruill, 1884, 1890, C.C. Stallings & Co., 1890, H.T. Stallings, 1896, Wm. L. Stallings & Co., 1877, all general merchants; N.S. Stallings, operator of sawmill [steam] and general merchant in 1896; W.L. Stallings, operator of sawmill [steam] and general merchant, 1896; R.D. Styron, millinery, 1884; W.W. Vaughan, grocery, 1896; S.L. Wallace & Co., 1884, 1890, 1896, J.A. Ward & Bro., 1884, Mrs. Mary A.M. Ward 1896, all general merchants;

J.R. Baldree, manufacturer of coaches, 1884; Martindale, Cruxton & Co., manufacturer of lumber, 1869, 1872; Joel Smithwick, manufacturer of lumber and shingles, 1884; F.B. Hardison, grist and saw mill [water], 1896; W.C. Lightfoot, grist and sawmill [steam], 1869, 1872, 1877; R.S. Schultz, grist and sawmill [steam], 1884; Dennis Simmons, sawmill [steam], 1890 [also listed as Williamston manufacturer in 1884 and 1896];

Parmele:

In 1896, Parmle was a booming town, with ten individuals and firms listed as general merchants, two lumber mills and one confectioner. Parmele-Eccleston Lumber Co. and North State

Lumber Co. were the two lumber manufacturing firms, Thomas Whitley operated the confectionary store, and the ten general merchants were as follows: Andrews & Purvis, J.C. Andrews, A.L. Bellflower, Gaynor & Peele, W.H. Harper, W.M. Jones & Co., Parmele Commissary Co., D.S. Powell & Co., W.M. Powell, and Purvis, Bryant & Co.;

Roanoke

The post office by this name is believed to have been located on the Roanoke River between Hamilton and Palmyra and was operated on an off-and-on basis from as early as 1842 until it was finally discontinued in April 1880. Only one business firm ever received its mail there, so far as available records show—although there must have been others. That firm was Tyler & Gregory, referred to in some of the Bryant Bennett papers in 1869 and 1872. It was listed as a general mercantile firm;

Robersonville:

General merchants dominated the field of business in Robersonville from 1877 until 1896, no less than 34 of the firms listed as active during that period being in that classification. The seven others included one drug store, one milliner, one coach manufacturer, one corn-mill operator, and three persons or firms engaged in running cotton gins, grist and sawmills, according to papers in the Bryant Bennett collection. The 34 firms and individuals listed as general merchants were as follows:

J.A. Coburn, 1869, 1872, Daniel & Hargrove, 1884, M. Everett & Bro., 1890, W.A. Everett, 1896, N.H. Hardison, 1896, W.H. Hardison & Co., 1884, 1890, 1896, G.S. James, 1890, Theodore Keel, 1877, W.D. Keel, 1896, W.T. Outterbridge, 1884, W.E. Page & Co., 1890, Mrs. M.R. Peel & Co., 1896, A.G. Roberson & Co., 1896, Roberson & Gainer, 1884, Roberson & Outterbridge 1877, A.S. Roberson & Co., 1896, E. B. Roberson, 1877, 1884, G. D. Roberson, 1896, G.E. & J.C. Roberson 1896, G.O. Roberson, 1884, H.D. Roberson & Son, 1884, J.E. Roberson & Son, 1896, M.A. Roberson, 1896, R.H. Roberson, 1884, W.W. Roberson & Bro., 1877, H. Ross & Co., 1896, J. K. Ross & Bro., 1890, S. L. Ross, 1896, R. T. Taylor, 1890, 1896, S.G. Taylor, 1896, J.S. Tripp, 1890, H. Winfield, 1884, J.J. Winfield, 1884, and Wynn & Everett, 1890:

The other seven Robersonville firms and individuals, and their businesses, were as follows: Dr. R.H. Hargrove, drug store [also physician], 1896; Mrs. H.B. Roberson, milliner, 1896; R.L. Roberson, manufacturer of carriages, 1896; Roberson & Bros., operators of cotton gin, grist and sawmill [steam], 1884, 1890; H.D. Roberson, operator of cotton gin, grist and sawmill [steam], 1884; M.A. Roberson, operator of cotton gin, grist and sawmill [steam], 1896; and Joseph Wynn, corn-mill operator, 1884, 1890;

Wilsonville [Near Everetts]:

Only one firm was ever listed as being located at Wilsonville during the short period of its existence. The post office was established there in 1882 and was discontinued about two years later. The single firm mentioned in the Bennett papers was Brown & Wilson, operators of a sawmill [steam] there in 1884;

Williamston:

Williamston had more business and industrial firms and individuals mentioned in the Bryant Bennett collection than any other county town. Included in the listing are 90 businesses and mercantile firms, 18 under the heading of artisans and manufacturers, and 28 as operators of mills of one kind or another, mostly grist and sawmills. Some of the following are listed in more than one category:

Arthur Anderson, maker and dealer in saddles and harnesses, 1869, 1872; J.W. Anderson & Bro., general merchandise, 1896; G.W. Andrews, confectioner, 1877, 1884; Eli Askew, liquor, 1877; J.R. Pollard & Co., general merchandise, 1877, J.R. Ballard, groceries and liquors, 1890, 1896; Barnhill & Wynn, general merchandise and liquor, 1884; Biggs & Davenport 1890; H.E. Biggs & Co., 1890, J.D. Biggs & Co., 1877, 1884, all general merchants; S.R. Biggs, drugs, 1884, 1890 1896; W.H.T. Biggs & Co., 1877, Blount & Bro., 1896, M.Burroughs, 1884, C.D. Carstarphen & Co, 1896, all general merchants; J.K. Carstarphen, groceries and butcher, 1890; Wm. H. Carstarphen, 1869, 1872, 1877, 1884, 1890, J.B. Cherry, 1866, both general merchants; J.E. Cooke, painter, 1890; W.T. Crawford, groceries, 1877; J.W. Davenport & Co., 1884, M.B. Daws, 1896, both general merchants;

Mrs. J.T. Deans, milinery, 1890; J.H. Ellison, undertaker, 1890; James H. Ellison, carriages, 1869, 1872, 1877; W.A. Ellison, express, railroad agent, telegraph operator, 1890; S.P. Everett, 1884, Ewell & Shaw, 1869, 1872, both general merchants; J.L. Ewell, hay and grain, merchandise, 1896, general insurance 1890; Philander Ewell, jeweler 1890, 1896; J.A. Florsheim & Co., general merchandise, 1877; Joseph G. Godard, groceries and liquor, 1890; G. Godward, 1890, Noah S. Godward, 1877, 1884, Godwin & Robertson, 1896, J. S. Green, 1884, W. E. Griffin (near Williamston), 1896, all general merchants; Gurganus & Co., groceries and liquors, 1877; Gurganus & Crawford, 1896, Gurganus & Peel, 1884, Hadley & Co., 1877, Hadley & Phillips, 1877, Hassell & Burroughs, 1884, Hassell & Rogers, 1890, C. B. Hassell, 1869, 1872, 1877, E. W. Hassell, 1890, all general merchants;

W. H. Hassell, livery, 1896; Riley Heath, 1884, F. K. Hodges, 1896, both general merchants; A. Johnson (col.), livery, 1896; Wilson G. Lamb, 1869, John R. Lanier, 1869, 1872, J. D. Leggett, 1896, W. H. Leggett, 1896, all general merchants; Kader Lilley (near Williamston), general merchandise, 1884, 1890, 1896; Miss H. Lloyd, millinery, 1890; J. J. Martin, 1884, Anson J. Mizell, 1869, 1872, 1896, both general merchants; Mobley & Williams, groceries, 1884; James E. Moore, general merchandise, 1884; S. H. Newberry, livery, 1884, 1890; Mrs. N. V. Parrish, millinery, 1890; Peal & Groves, general merchandise, 1884; J. B. Peal, coaches, 1869, 1872;

J. H. Peal, 1890, Powell & Clark, 1896, William W. Purvis, 1869, 1872, general merchants; Rhodes & Bro., lumber, 1869, 1872; A. M. Riddick, 1884, 1890, W. L. Riddick & Co., 1884, general merchants; J. A. Roberson, groceries and liquors, 1884; J. R. Roberson, general merchandise, 1884, 1890; Roberson & Bro., groceries, 1869, 1872; Henry D. Roberson, general merchandise, 1869, 1872, 1877; A. R. Rogerson, groceries and liquors, 1884; Mrs. J. M. Sitterson, milliner, 1884, 1890; Slade & Biggs, 1869, 1872, William Slade, 1877, 1884, 1890, both general merchants; P. S. Sprewell (col.), groceries, 1896; James Tucker, harness, 1869, 1872; John H. Tucker, general merchandise, 1869, 1872; W. T. Ward & Co., drugs, 1890; B. B. Watts & Co., jewelers, 1884; J. W. Watts, news dealer, 1884; I. Wawalt, shoemaker, 1890; Mrs. D. B. Whitaker, milliner, 1869, 1872; Mrs. Courtney Williams & Co., 1877, L. Williams & Co., 1890, both general merchants; William R. Williams, general merchandise, groceries and liquors, 1877, 1884.

Armstrong & Bardwell, Roanoke Heading Co., manufacturers of barrels and headings, 1884; Samuel Bartlett, manufacturer of shoes, 1877, 1884, J. D. Biggs & Co., lumber and shingles, 1884, 1890; C. Corprew, blacksmith and wheelwright, 1884; James H. Ellington, manufacturer of coaches, 1869, 1872 (name listed as Ellison in 1877, 1884, 1890); Godwin & Roberson, shingles and lumber, 1896; C. W. Grandy & Co., lumber and shingles, 1884, 1890; R. W. Harris, manufacturer of shoes, 1884; John H. Hatton, blacksmith, 1869, 1872, 1878, 1884, 1890, 1896; Martin & Biggs, manufacturer of "cheap bedsteads," 1896; J. B. Peal, manufacturer of coaches, 1869, 1872, 1877; Rhodes & Bro., lumber, 1869, 1872, 1877; Dennis Simmons, lumber and shingles, 1884, 1890, 1896 (also listed in Jamesville; plant was located at Astoria, near there); J. G. Swain, maker of coaches, 1884, 1890; James Tucker, maker of harness, 1869, 1872; John Watts, lumber and shingles, 1884; B. R. Whitley, lumber, shingles, 1884, 1890, 1896;

George Britton, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877, 1884, 1890; M. Burroughs, sawmill (steam), 1896; Coltrain & Lanier, grist mill, 1884; H. A. Coltraine, grist mill, 1890, 1896; Coltrane & Hardison, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877; Elisha Everett, grist mill, 1868, 1872, 1877; Ewell & Rawls, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877; J. S. Green, grist mill, 1884, 1890; J. V. Green, grist mill, 1884, 1890; Hardison & Son, grist mill, 1884, 1890; John T. Hyman, grist mill (steam), 1869, 1872; L. B. James & Co., sawmill (steam), 1884, 1890; ———Leggett, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877; Kader Lilley (near Williamston), sawmill (steam), 1884, 1890, 1896; W. B. Mangum, sawmil (steam), 1884;

Mobley & Taylor, grist mill, 1884, 1890, 1896; Rhodes & Bro., sawmill (steam), 1869, 1872; J. L. Roberson, grist and sawmill, 1890, 1896; R. H. Rogerson, sawmill (steam), 1884, 1890, 1896; W. Salsbury, grist mill (steam), 1884; Estate of W. R. W. Sherrod, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877 — — — Ward, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877; J. L. Ward, sawmill (steam), 1884, 1890; John Watts, sawmill (steam), 1877; J. H. Whitaker, grist and sawmill (steam), 1884; ——— Woolard, grist mill, 1869, 1872, 1877; and Bryant (Bryant) Wynn, sawmill (steam), 1884, 1890.

Except for the opening of its first tobacco market on August 7, 1900, the final year of the 19th century was relatively uneventful in the commercial and industrial progress of the county. However, the opening of that first market in Robersonville, followed by the one in Williamston two years later, marked a turning point in the county's economic history. It was a tremendous step forward in cash crop farming—which now brings over $30 million a year into the county. It also set the stage for later year-round industries developing out of the agricultural products produced in the area.

The Greenleaf-Johnson Lumber Company is known to have been operating a sawmill in the Macedonia section in January, 1901, when J. A. Roberson, of the Amherst section of Griffins Township, went to work there, according to an old newspaper report. There was also a report of a small fire at the North State lumber mill in Parmele in January, 1901; and in November of the same year the engine at S. W. Casper & Brother mill in Conoho (Oak City) ran away when a piece of a broken band saw knocked the governor off. "Before the throttle could be shut off, the engine was leaving the mill pretty rapidly," the report stated. In another newspaper report of an accident, Kinchen Mobley was said not to have been seriously hurt when his coat sleeve was caught in his cotton gin in Everetts, December 19, 1901. A great many gin operators in those days lost one or both arms in similar accidents.

Scattered items about various business undertakings during the early part of the present century follow: W. Matthew Wilson operated a grocery in Williamston in April, 1901; Miss Alice V. Lutz resigned as milliner for C. D. Carstarphen & Co., Williamston, in June, 1901; R. L. Smith opened a store with a new stock of goods in T. H. Grimes' new building in Robersonville; S. Cooper & Co. was operating a store in Hassell on June 21, 1901, a report stating that Roy Fleming was working as a clerk that day for Adrian Whichard. Among the earliest insurance agents in this county was the Rev. J. O. Guthrie, who came over to Williamston from Goldsboro in September, 1901, and worked four days.

Martin County farmers organized a mutual fire insurance company in 1902, holding their annual meeting January 18, that year. There were several hundred members. D. R. Perkins was a livestock dealer in Robersonville in January, 1902, buying many of his horses in Norfolk. Perkins is also believed to have operated a hotel about that time. R. L. Smith & Company, of Robersonville, purchased the stock of the W.W. Waters firm there in January, 1902, and after disposing of it offered the store for rent.

The following business items of 1903 were picked up from various sources: C.C. Fagan resumed operation of his sawmill in the Dardens section in April, 1903, and was reported to be doing a "lively" business; Messrs. Davenport & Moore of Conoho [Oak city] and L.F. Waters of Greenville opened stores in Jamesville during the early part of 1903; two firms in Robersonville reported having new clerks to go to work with them in May 1903, Dan Clark with A.S. Roberson & Co., and William Ross with S.L. Ross & Brother; Wilmer M. Sitterson was in Goose Nest as salesman for Southern Supply Co. of Williamston in May, 1903; John Peel was listed as a painter for S.G. Taylor Buggy Co. in Gold Point in September, 1903; and Ed Huffines was said to be an insurance agent in the county about the middle of that year. He sold his business to K.B. Crawford, a name that is still retained in the general insurance firm of Harrison & Crawford in Williamston.

A business directory for 1903 listed 17 saloons in Martin County. Williamston led in number with five, Nicholson & Co., S.L. Godard, R.M. Brown, James A. Mizell & Co., and Watts & Gurganus. Three towns had three each, R. T. Taylor & Watts & Gurganus. Three towns had three each, R.T. Taylor & Co., L. Walker and J.T. Casper, Hamilton; J.L. Weaver & Co., J.G. Barnhill, and Phelps & Clark Everetts; J.V. Gray & Co., H.T. Stallings and W.H. Tweedy, Jamesville. There were two in Conoho [Oak City], J.C. Jordan & Co., and Thomas Harrell & Co.; and one in Hassell, F.L. Salsbury. None was listed in Robersonville at that time, but three years later there were three saloons in Robersonville and none in Williamston, according to another directory.

The Hamilton Pants Manufacturing Company was organized and by 1904 was said to be doing a very good business in Hamilton. Because of superior shipping facilities and other inducements, the plant was moved to Williamston in 1912. Williamston people provided a site on the railroad at Elm Street and paid the moving costs; and $4,000 in stock was subscribed by Charles H. Godwin, George W. Blount, and N. S. [State] Peel. The company continued to grow and later moved to Greensboro, changing its name and developing into one of the larger manufacturers of its type in the South.

L.B. Wynne who was later to become postmaster in Williamston, was operating a grist mill and cotton gin in Everetts in September, 1904. That same year, in October, a meeting was held in Williamston at which local people pledged $2,000 for a shirt factory. At a subsequent meeting, the amount of stock subscribed was increased to $5,300; but the subscribers disagreed as to the type of manufacturing in which they were to be engaged. A committee of five—John D. Simpson, Wheeler Martin, C.D. Carstarphen, D.S. Biggs, and A.E. Whitmore—was appointed to investigate different branches of manufacturing and report later. Evidently this ended the matter, as there is no report of any further meeting. In December 1904, John Croom moved to Gold Point and opened a machine and blacksmith shop, rendering a valuable service to farmers in various parts of the county for many years.

There were a number of similar shops located in several parts of the county during the early part of the 20th century. Among them were Woolard's in Bear Grass Township, Baynor's near old Dymond City, and others.

There is a report that the Martin County Veneer Works had a large plant located near the Williamston municpal wharf at the Roanoke River in March, 1905, but the names of the owners or operators are not known. Carolina Brick Company of Kinston operated a plant at Robersonville in June, 1905, with a capacity of 30,000 ornamental brick daily. P. H. Brown moved to Williamston from Jamesville in June, 1905, to become associated with the furniture department of Simpson Hardware Company. F. K. and W. J. Hodges dissolved their partnership in January, 1905, and S. S. Brown and W. J. Hodges announced that they had bought the business and would continue its operation under the firm name of Brown & Hodges. Mrs. J. F. Kemps operated a store in Jamesville in July, 1905, an ice cream supper sonsored by Pugh Ward being held there at that time.

A 1906 yearbook listed 11 merchants who had stores not located inside the city limits of any towns. Names and post office addresses follow: Kader Lilley, George Griffin, and W. E. Griffin, near Williamston; N. R. Manning, near Jamesville; J. J. Roberson Brothers, near Amherst; Jones Mercantile Co., Inc., near Dardens; J. R. Ayers, Tranters; M. W. Ballard, Ballard's; R. H. Salsbury and S. Cooper & Co., near Hassell; W. Roberson, near Palmyra. The same year there were 21 cotton gins in the county, owners and post-office addresses as follows: S. L. Wallace, N. R. Manning, A. J. Roberson, W. E. Sexton, W. H. Stallings, S. L. Wallace, Jamesville; J. A. Everett, R. H. Salsbury, J. R. H.

Salsbury, Hassell; Williamston Ginning & Milling Co., Inc., Williamston; Paul Bowen, Kader Lilley, F. J. Roebuck, Staton & Daniel, V. R. Taylor, J. H. Ward, S. P. Ward, Williamston, RFD; and S. W. Casper, Joseph Early, and E. P. Hyman, Oak city.

Other business firms and individuals in 1906 with Williamston addresses were: Roanoke Hotel, Hassell House, hotels; Simpson Hardware Co., agricultural implements, oil and paint dealer S. W. Harrell, W. T. Rhodes, barber shops; Bank of Martin County, Farmers & Merchants Bank, bankers; J. B. McGowan, York & Adams, W. H. Legget, butchers and cattle dealers; T. C. Cooke, J. H. Hatton, J. L. Woolard, blacksmith shops; R. A. Glenn, Edward Williams, shoe shops; Latham, Thrower, A. C. Jones, John Respass, contractors and builders; Harrison Brothers & Co., Anderson, Crawford & Co., C. D. Carstarphen, Blount & Brother, Macht Brothers & Rutenberg, Cowing-Harrison Co., Gurganus & Son, Hodges & Coburn, J. L. Hassell & Co., A. L. Mizell & Co., C. Leggett & Co., clothing, dry goods, general merchandise; J. B. H. Knight, S. R. Biggs, druggists; Mrs. Henrietta Bateman, Mrs. Lizzie Woodhouse, dressmakers; Watts & Gurganus, dealer in ice; Martin County Tobacco Warehouse Co., Staton & Meadows, Graham & Neal, leaf tobacco dealers; Leonora Collins, hairdresser; W. H. Robertson, F. K. Hodges, J. A. Mizell, dealers in hides and pelts; K. B. Crawford, S. Atwood Newell, insurance agencies; John Lee, laundry; Marvel Package Co., Dennis Simmons Lumber Co., lumber manufacturers and dealers; N. T. Perry, mason and builder; Miss Nannie Smith, Miss Carrie Biggs, music teachers; J. A. Mizell, Brown & Hodges, Southern Supply Co., (wholesale), grocers; Martin Livestock Co., Inc., Hassell & Carstarphen, livery and sales stables; and Herbert D. Peele, jeweler.

Robersonville merchants and business firms in 1906 were: Griffin Hotel, Hotel Burch, Ross House, hotels; Bank of Robersonville, banking; A. S. Roberson & Co., G. D. Roberson & Sons, J. H. Roberson & Co., R. L. Smith & Co., S. L. Ross & Brother, Bailey & Barnhill, general merchandise and cotton buyers; J. M. Wheeless, druggist; Carolina Brick & Tile Co., Young Wine Factory, D. B. Parker Buggy Co., manufacturers; Wiley Rogerson & Co., machine shop, grist and feed mill; J. S. Roberson & Son, J. W. Smith, grocers; W. A. James & Co., A. C. Barnhill, Taylor Brothers, saloons; Adkins & Bailey, Gentry & James, Morton & Thornburg, leaf tobacco dealers; Grimes & James, R. T. Purvis, and J. L. Keel & Co., livery and sales stables.

Gold Point had six business firms in 1906: B. H. Roberson & Son, J. B. Coburn, J. J. Weaver, R. T. Taylor, general merchants; J. L. Weaver, and A. C. Smith, saloons. Oak City had five retail stores: Harrell & Ross, Casper Brothers, Burnett & Jones, Johnson & Everett, general merchants; and J. L. Hines, general merchant and grocer. Parmele had only four firms: Bryan & Son, J. H. Bynum, A. G. Powell, general merchants; and J. H. Whichard, retail grocer.

Hamilton, in 1906, had the following firms and individuals in business: T. E. Darden, Mrs. J. B. Cloman, hotels; Slade, Jones & Co., R. W. Salsbury & Brother, H. L. Pippen & Co., general merchants and cotton buyers; Baker & Salsbury, P. Sherrod, general merchants; W. E. Davenport, F. L. Haislip, saloons; and Hamilton Pants Factory, manufacturer. Jamesville business firms were: Kemp House, hotel; U. S. Hassell, Brown & Co., S. L. Wallace, A. F. Stallings, H. T. Stallings, W. B. Lilley, Davenport & Moore, Dennis Simmons Lumber Company store, general merchants; H. C. Jackson & Brother, W. P. Moore, J. C. Jordan, grocers; Boyle Manufacturing Co., White & Wallace, J. L. Coltrain & Brother, Roberson Brothers, N. R. Manning, sawmills; and Dennis Simmons Lumber Co., saw and shingle mill.

Equipment for the first peanut cleaning and shelling plant in Martin County was ordered early in 1907 by a group of Williamston businessmen. Eli Gurganus was promoter of the project and was to manage the plant, those associated with him being J. G. Staton, J. G. Godard, J. R. Mobley and Herbert H. Cowen. The firm was to have $10,000 capital, and the equipment ordered was said to be capable of cleaning and shelling 200 bags of peanuts daily. A building on the railroad was leased, and the plant was to be ready to begin operations by July 1, 1907 under the name of Virginia-Carolina Peanut Company, according to a newspaper report. In February of the following year, it was announced that two machines were being added to increase the capacity of the plant to 500 bags daily. The plant in 1908 was employing about 40 persons and had a weekly payroll of $275. At that time, Martin was one of the largest peanut-producing counties in the country at 150,000 bags annually; and Williamston claimed to be the largest wagon-market for peanuts in the world.

Several other business undertakings were launched in Williamston in 1907. The Southern Veneer Company's plant on the Roanoke River, about where Moratock Park is now located, was leased in February to the Francis-Eure Veneer Co., composed of W. J. Francis, M. K. Eure and H. A. Eure. The firm was said to have had sufficient orders in March to keep the plant running for the remainder of the year. The Martin County Timber Cmpany was organized later that year, in December. John T. Lynch was president and Joseph G. Godard was secretary. Little is known about the concern, and its operations are believed to have been limited.

Formation of a stock company to start a buggy factory in Williamston was announced early in 1907. The firm was to begin with $5,000 capital, stockholders being listed as T. J. Smith J. G. Godard, Wheeler Martin I, George W. Blount, J. G. Staton, S. A. Newell, and S. J. Everett. Equipment and materials for the plant were ordered in February, and negotiations were underway then for leasing the building formerly occupied by the Newberry Livery Stable, located on West Main Street about where the Belk-Tyler store now stands. John Z. Gardner, who had been with Flanagan Buggy Company in Greenville for about 10 years, was to be in charge of the plant's operations. Another Williamston firm mentioned for the first time in March, 1907, was that of Brown & Roberson, P. H. Brown being in Baltimore at that time to purchase spring and summer goods for the store.

In July, 1908, D. D. Stalls and R. H. Lanier were engaged in the manufacture of carts, wagons, buggies, and tobacco trucks in Everetts. They also operated a saw and grist mill and cotton gin there. In December of that year, it was announced that the Melrose Pulp & Milling Company had started clearing a site on the Marshall D. Wilson farm near the A.C.L. Railroad Company's wharf on the Roanoke River, for a large plant devoted to the manufacture of wood pulp and lumber. M. L. Rosenwald of Cleveland, Ohio, who had married Miss Mary Robertson of Williamston in November, 1908, was principal stockholder and was to be manager of the plant. There is no record of the plant ever being completed and put into operation.

Meeting in the office of Dr. R. H. Hargrove on January 10, 1910, a number of citizens of the Robersonville community subscribed $11,000 for stock in a proposed hosiery mill there. The meeting was promoted by J. W. Ferrell, and Attorney Harry W. Stubbs of Williamston was one of the principal speakers. Less than a month later, on February 1, Robersonville Hosiery Manufacturing Company was chartered, with $100,000 authorized capital and $17,100 paid in. Incorporators were listed as J. H. Roberson & Co., A. S. Roberson & Co., and J. C. Roberson; and construction of a building for the new industry, located at the western edge of the town, was completed by July, 1910. At that time Robersonville was taking a leading part in county industry. In addition to the hosiery mill, a large cotton gin was being completed, and there was talk of establishing a fertilizer factory in the town.

Williamston's industrial development received a setback in March, 1911, when fire of unknown origin destroyed the plant of the Virginia-Carolina Peanut Company, the boiler room and prize house—including the office—of the Martin County Warehouse Company, and other property belonging to Meadows & Staton. The boiler room for an electric plant, then under construction, was also burned; but generating equipmennt had not been installed, although it was at the railroad station awaiting delivery. Total loss was estimated at $46,000 with about $22,000 insurance in force. The fire delayed installation of electric lights in the town for some time. Police Chief W. R. White discovered the fire early, but an inadequate water supply hampered efforts to bring it under control.

After operating a large lumber mill just west of Everetts for a number of years, G. P. McNaughton on April 7, 1911, offered all his property there for sale. The offering included 500,000 feet of gum, poplar, and cypress timber, mill site, equipment, and residence. Beginning work on a new building in 1911, Wiley Rogerson & Company of Robersonville moved into it during the early part of Februray, 1912. The firm operated a machine shop, saw and planing mill, manufactured carts and wagons, offered a general repair service for all machinery and farm equipment, and sold coffins and caskets in addition to its own products.

The year 1912 saw a number of changes take place in the county. In a review published near the end of the year, the Williamston Enterprise expressed the opinion that the foundation was being laid for a changing economy. The automobile was beginning to develop into an everday fact of life, instead of a curiosity as it had been prior to that time; business was said to be flourishing and, with the exception of peanuts, farmers had very good crops. It was said a trend away from one-crop farming could be detected.

Relocation of the Hamilton Pants Manufacturing Company in Williamston, operations being started on September 12, 1912, and construction of a railroad track to the new cooperage plant on the river were rated among top gains for that community. The Williamston telephone and electric companies reported healthy increases in business, expansion of telephone service in rural areas being especially outstanding. Anderson, Crawford & Company was rated the largest mercantile firm in the county at that time. S. Romulus Biggs, Jr., opened an auto sales agency and garage in Williamston, as also did J. Paul Simpson, the latter handling three different makes, EMF, Overland, and, later, Studebaker. Despite the gains made by the automobile, the Martin County Buggy Company, operated by A. T. Crawford and W. L. Stalls, handled a large business, selling machinery by the carloads and repairing just about everything, including automobiles. Woolard harrows and cultivators were being manufactured in substantial quantities in the shop of J.L. Woolard (S.R. Biggs Iron & Motor Company acquired that business and the Woolard patent rights a year or so later). A new mercantile firm, Y. E. Touma & Brother, located in Williamston early in 1912.

Among the principal economic assets of Robersonville about that time were the tobacco market, with three firms operating, the hosiery mill, a fertilizer factory owned and operated by J. H. Roberson, II, and the new Parker Buggy Company, which was turning out one vehicle a day. The hosiery mill there was reorganized and renamed Robersonville-Tar River Hosiery Mill in February, 1912, with an authorized capital of $125,000; 16 stockholders, headed by J. H. Roberson, subscribed for $16,000 of the stock. Other firms in Oak City, Hassell, Hamilton, Everetts, and Jamesville were said to be keeping pace with the expanding economy.

A movement was launched in Williamston in February, 1913, to rebuild the peanut cleaning plant destroyed by fire nearly two years earlier. W. C. Manning, vice president of the chamber of commerce, presided at a meeting attended by a number of farmers who were interested in having a plant in the county, with the discussion being led by W. T. Meadows, S. E. Hardison, Pleny Peel, and Eli Gurganus. All seemed to favor forming a stock company, capitalized at $25,000, with shares to be sold at $50 each. Committees to explain the plan in their respective areas were appointed as follows, with others to be named later: S.E. Hardison and W.W. Griffin, Williams Township; Pleny Peel and A.G. Griffin, Griffins; J.L. Wynne and V.R. Taylor, Poplar Point; Harry Waldo and J.M.S. Salsbury, Hamilton; Mack Mobley and G.A. Peel, Bear Grass; K.B. Crawford, Leslie T. Fowden, B.A. Critcher, Sr., Farmers & Merchants Bank and Bank of Martin County, Williamston Township. The plan fell through, and it was not until 1915 that another plant was built. That was located on the railroad near the Pearl Street intersection. Leslie Fowden, Herbert H. Cowen, and Dr. J. H. Saunders were the owners of the four-story building, but it was destroyed by fire during the first year of its operation.

The Robersonville Guano Company, under the management of J.H. Roberson, II, was reported to be running at full capacity in April, 1913, and the mill and factory of Wiley Rogerson & Company were the busiest places in Robersonville at that time. Fifteen homes were under construction, and it was estimated that $40,000 was being invested in improvements to business buildings on Main Street. An industrial directory for 1913 reported the following manufacturing enterprises in operation, in addition to the two listed above: J.L. Woolard [harrows and cultivators], Martin County Buggy Co., Williamston Milling Co., Martin County Brick & Tile Co., Manning & Adams, Brown & Ward, Dennis Simmons Lumber Co., Williamston; Robersonville-Tar River Hosiery Mills, D.B. Parker Buggy Co., Robersonville Tile & Concrete Co., Robersonville; and J.L. Croom & Co. [buggies], Gold Point.

Starting in the boiler room, fire completely destroyed the sawmill owned and operated by Coltrain Brothers (James L. and C. C.) near Maple Grove Church in the Hardison's Mill section of Griffins Township on August 11, 1915. The plant and lumber on the yard were completely destroyed, the loss being estimated at $3,500, with no insurance. The owners and employees were at their noonday meal when the fire started, and the Maple Grove Church was threatened for a time.

Williamston made a bid for a Dupont powder plant in December, 1915, but was not successful in its efforts. The first World War had been underway in Europe for more than a year, and Dupont, as one of the principal munitions makers in the world, was seeking sites for expansion. The chamber of commerce wired an invitation to officials of the company, asking for consideration, and followed up the invitation with a resume of this section's advantages, including availability of water transportation. More than 30 years later, Dupont did come to eastern North Carolina, locating at Kinston, but the plant was far different from the type sought by Williamston in 1915.

A North Carolina business directory for 1915 listed the following general mercantile firms in the county: Anderson, Crawford & Co., J. L. Hassell & Co., Harrison Brothers & Company, F. K. Hodges & Co., M. B. McGowan, Y. E. Touma, Blount & Brothers,

C. D. Carstarphen & Co., Theo Roberson & Co., W. J. Hodges, Williamston; Holliday, Roberson & Co., R. T. Purvis, J. H. Roberson & Co., A. S. Roberson & Co., J. T. Brown & House, Jenkins & Roberson, W. A. Roberson & Co., R. L. Smith & Co., Bailey & Barnhill, J. E. Taylor, Robersonville; J. L. Williams, J. B. Coburn, A. C. Smith, B. H. Ross, Gold Point;

Also W. H. Stallings, U. S. Hassell & Co., E. H. Ange & Brother, H. G. Griffin, W. H. Mizell & Co., The Three Company, Ira T. Coltrain, W. H. Martin, W. J. Holliday, W. H. Lilley, Jamesville; Slade, Rhodes & Co., R. W. Salsbury & Brother, Davenport & Brother, P. Sherrod, J. B. Williams, W. E. Davenport, L. F. Forrest & Co., Hamilton; J. T. Stokes, Gray & Roebuck, J. C. Wynn, J. H. Bryan & Co., R. L. Whitley, J. C. James, Parmele; Oak City Supply Co., H. K. Harrell, J. C. Ross & Co., Geo. L. Daniel, Davenport & Chesson, and C. Dolberry, Oak City.

That same year the directory listed the following insurance agents and agencies in the county: K. B. Crawford, J. E. Pope, F. F. Fagan, Williamston; Mizelle & Roberson, Roberson & Bailey, Mizell & Co., Robersonville; A. Corey, J. D. Lilley, J. L. Davenport, and W. W. Walters, Jamesville. The directory also listed four undertaking firms in 1916, as follows: Bailey & Barnhill, Robersonville; B. F. Myers, Hamilton; W. H. Ange, Jamesville; Casper Brothers, Oak City; and S. R. Biggs, Williamston. This was the first published reference to such an occupation, although some of those mentioned had been in business for years. In earlier years, general stores usually sold coffins and caskets, and quite often friends of the deceased took charge of funeral arrangements on a voluntary basis, making the services of an undertaker or mortician unnecessary.

It was a few years before this time that the first chamber of commerce was organized in the county and began taking an active part in the development of community enterprises. At a meeting of business and professional men in the old Lotus Club rooms in February, 1916, the Williamston Chamber of Commerce was reorganized, following suggestions advanced by C. M. Maul, advertising representative of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company, who was chief speaker at the meeting. R. G. Harrison, Sr., was elected president and W. C. Manning, Sr., secretary-treasurer. This chamber of commerce had been originally organized in June, 1912, primarily to promote removal of the Hamilton Pants Manufacturing Company's plant from Hamilton to Williamston. Attorney H. W. Stubbs was the first president, Mr. Manning was vice president, and S. A. Newell was secretary-treasurer. After that purpose had been accomplished, the organization gradually became dormant. Similar organizations have been formed and functioned with varying degrees of success and permanency in most of the towns in the county.

The Williamston Chamber of Commerce has continued active from its reorganization in 1916 until the present, although there have been intervals when it seened as if very little was being done. Most of the chamber records and minutes between 1916 and 1949 have been lost, but it is known to have served the town in many ways. This was especially true during World War I days, as well as the Depression and recovery years, when so many community projects were dependent on united efforts obtainable only through an established organization.

The organization was incorporated in May, 1949, as the Williamston Boosters, Al Sweatt being employed on a full-time basis to serve as managing director of the organization. Previously, Lyn Taylor had served as part-time manager in 1947, when there were about 80 members. C. B. Clark, Jr., was first president of the incorporated organization. He has been succeeded by the following (listed in order): R. Edwin Peele, 1952-53; W. Marvin Baker, 1953-54; A. J. Manning, 1954-55; George W. Corey, 1955-56, 1956-57; Charles Gaylord, 1957-58, 1958-59; Ben D. Courtney, 1959-60; Wheeler M. Manning, 1960-61; Gilbert G. Woolard, 1961-62; Edward A. Hunter, 1962-63; A. L. Jameson, 1963-64; William R. Peel, 1964-65; John R. Haden, 1965-66; Wilbur D. Edwards, 1967-68; Wilbur L. Jackson, 1968-69; Lawrence Lindsley, 1969-70; Jack W. Lewis, 1970-71; Linwood G. Boyd, 1971-72; David L. Hughes, 1972-73; Bracey F. Fountain, 1973-74.

Al Sweatt served as manager of the organization for about four years, resigning in 1953 to accept a similar position in Rocky Mount. He was succeeded by Ed L. Grady of Monroe. The charter was amended in 1955, renaming the organization the Williamston Chamber of Commerce. The merchants association was merged with the chamber at some point prior to 1956, when a credit reporting agency was formed; the agency has operated as an adjunct of the chamber under the supervision of the merchants committee and the managing director. It is now more or less independently operated as the Roanoke Credit Association.

Following Mr. Grady as managing director of the chamber of commerce have been the following, (all from Williamston unless otherwise noted): John H. Gurganus, Mrs. W. E. Drake, Irving C.

Dodge of Chapel Hill, J. M. Robinson of Edenton, Roger A. Critcher, and John T. Boykin, Jr. In addition, Mrs. Helen W. Wynne and Mrs. Alice Mears served temporarily as secretaries to the board of directors between changes in managing directors. Mrs. Drake served longer than any other manager, about eight years, from 1956 until 1964, when she accepted a like position in Haines City, Fla. Mr. Dodge held the office for about four years, from 1964 until 1968. Under a reorganization effected in 1971, the title of the office was changed to executive vice president, with a contract renegotiable every two years. John T. Boykin is the present executive head of the organization.

Among other things, in recent years the chamber has been active in promoting the tobacco market and sponsoring two peanut festivals and fat stock shows; it was instrumental in organizaing the industrial development corporation, which has brought several new industries to various parts of the county; it launched the movement to secure a food-processing establishment that resulted in construction of the Martindale plant; and sponsored the United Fund in Williamston, which, although not a part of the chamber of commerce, has been largely dependent on it for its continued operation. The organization also sponsors the annual Christmas parade, which has become an institution that has attracted crowds estimated as high as 15,000 in recent years.

The chamber of commerce was a prime mover in securing a county airport, with paved and lighted runways, and in securing fourlaning of the Williamston by-pass and U. S. Highway 17 from the river bridge to Windsor, as well as from the Skewarkey intersection five miles south to the Old Mill Inn site; it co-sponsored with the Woman's Club the municipal fountain at the triangle formed by the intersection of Washington and South Haughton Streets and the railroad; and recommended discontinuance of parking meters and creation of the present, 2,284 off-street parking spaces in the town and its shopping centers. One of the major long-term undertakings in which it was involved in the spring of 1974 was the so-called "Downtown Beautification Project," similar to that being undertaken in several other towns of the state, including some of the larger cities. It has had some sketches and plans made for improvements that can be made to existing buildings in the business district and has obtained tentative estimates of costs involved. It also has an active recruitment committee seeking additional physicians and surgeons for the county in connection with expansion of the new county hospital, which chamber of commerce officials helped bring into existence in earlier years.

This is but a partial list of the countless community and county projects with which the Williamston Chamber of Commerce has been involved. Similar organizations have been formed and are operating in other towns of the county, mostly on a volunteer basis. Robersonville has a very active chamber of commerce, operating on a part or full-time basis depending on need, and it, too, has a long list of community accomplishments to its credit. It has been especially active in promoting the Robersonville Tobacco Market over the years; and, more recently, has taken a leading part in sponsoring and encouraging modernization and beautification of the downtown business section there. It also did a lot of preliminary work in bringing new industries to the locality over the past four or five years, conducting labor surveys, helping to secure housing for personnel of the several new plants after they came into the community, and in many other ways aiding in expansion of opportunities for growth of the section. As a general rule, all of the various organizations in the several towns cooperate and work very well together in major undertakings for betterment of the county.

One of the early wholesale firms in Williamston was Harrison Wholesale Company, organized in March, 1916, by George H. Harrison, C. A. Harrison, and R. E. Roberson. It was first located on Washington Street in what was called the "Graball" section, but soon moved into its own building on a lot located between the railroad station and the Farmers Warehouse. The firm carried a varied line of groceries and notions and employed several salesmen to cover its territory, which embraced Martin and a number of adjoining counties. The active partners in the firm, widely known as "George and Gus" Harrison, later became distributors of Texaco oil products in the area, devoting more and more of their time to this phase of the business as the automobile increased in importance. Their new firm, Harrison Oil Company, became one of the larger Texaco independent distributorships, continuing to the present time under the same firm name. Following the death of C. A. Harrison in February, 1940, their wholesale grocery business was sold to the firm of Martin & Elliott, which continued to operate it for a number of yers.

Fred Gardner, who for several years was operator of the Martin County Brick Yard near the point where McCaskey Road crosses the railroad west of Williamston, moved with his family to Franklin, Va., about the middle of October, 1919. He is believed to have built the first brick residence in Williamston, at the intersection of South Watts and Beech Streets. There had been a brick-making plant in Robersonville prior to this time, it is understood.

Nassef Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of overalls and shirts, moved to Williamston from New Bern in April, 1924, and operated for a short time in what was then known as the "Flatiron Building," owned by J. G. Staton, at the intersection of Washington and Railroad Streets. The firm brought 128 machines, but only about 60 persons were employed at the start of operations, the payroll amounting to about $1,000 per week.

Shortly before this time, in January, 1921, Julius S. Peel bought some land on present rural secondary road No. 1510, between U. S. 64 and the railroad and planned to start a town there, named "Brickline," with general stores, a brick kiln, fertilizer depot, and other businesses. A portion of the site was cleared, but interest lagged, and the proejct never went any further.

Two old Main Street landmarks in Williamston were swallowed up by the march of progress in 1925, when the former residences of Elder C. B. Hassell and Attorney James Edwin Moore were moved to make room for business establishments. The Hassell home, built before the Civil War, was turned around and moved from the center of its lot between what is now Baltimore Street and the Jones Hardware Building so that it faced Church Street directly back of its original site. The old home is now occupied by Mrs. Olive Dailey, while the Main Street lots on which it was formerly located are now occupied by the Branch Bank Building, a theater, two drug stores, and other businesses.

The other landmark, at the intersection of Main and Washington streets, was the old home of James Edwin Moore, one of the county's outstanding lawyers of earlier years. It was built around 1875 and, following his death in 1898, the house was repaired and enlarged in 1903. It was moved in 1925 to a new location on Williams Street in New Town, the original site now being occupied by Central Service Station.

Coming up to 1927, a directory of manufacturers listed the following in Martin County: S. R. Biggs Iron & Motor Company, Lindsley Ice Company, R. S. Critcher & Sons, lumber, Daniel & Staton, lumber, Murray & McCabe, lumber, Wicomico Lumber Company, Enterprise Publishing Company, all of Williamston;

Robersonville Guano Company, W. F. Hurst, copper, tin and sheet metal work, Taylor Mill & Gin Company, and Robersonville Printing Company, all of Robersonville.

Often proposed earlier, though never carried through to fulfillment, action was taken in 1927 to locate a fertilizer manufacturing and mixing plant in Martin County. C.G. Crockett, a Yorktown, Va., native engaged in the fertilizer business, while traveling through this section, happened to be held up by a passing boat at the Roanoke River drawbridge in Williamston. He talked with a man fishing from the bank and learned there was no history of the south bank having been flooded at that point. Impressed, he discussed the site and prospects with C.B. Mitchell, vice-president of Standard Wholesale Phosphate & Acid Works, Baltimore, Md., and on July 1, 1927, they came to Williamston and made arrangements to begin construction immediately of a fertilizer plant just south of the river bridge.

Thus was launched the Standard Fertilizer Company, Inc., a division of Standard Wholesale & Acid Works, Baltimore, Md., which was to be a mainstay in the economic life of the county for many years. The plant was completed and placed in operation on January 9, 1928, when the first shipment of three carloads of mixed fertilizers was made to Columbia, N.C. Mr. Crockett was general manager of the Williamston operation until his retirement, and Rush W. Bondurant was plant superintendent until his retirement around 1962. After the first year's operation in 1928, it was decided to build a second mill and this one was completed by the fall of 1928 and ready for the 1929 crop season. In the fall of the 1929 season, the No.3 mill was started and by the beginning of the 1930 season Standard had three mills in operation and a storage capacity of 35,000 tons of mixed fertilizers and raw materials. Most of the materials were brought to the plant by barges.

The company continued to grow and expand, although growth was limited to some extent during the Depression years of the 1930's. It was during that period that the company foreclosed liens on so many mules pledged as security that it had to build a corral and stables for the animals at the plant and get into the livestock business on a substantial scale. A severe blow was the August, 1940, record flood of the Roanoke River, which washed away thousands of tons of fertilizers when the water went into the offices and plant. The height of the flood waters surpassed records that had stood for more than 100 years. Depsite the damage, the plant was ready for operations again at the start of the 1941 season.

From 1940 through World War II the fertilizer firm operated an experimental farm of 250 acres in the vicinity of Aurora. In addition to production of food crops as an adjunct to the war effort, valuable knowledge was obtained about fertilizaton and cultivation methods. The first crop irrigation experiments in North Carolina were conducted there. They were so successful that the firm entered that field following the war, both as manufacturer and distributor of irrigation systems. Mr. Crockett's son, Thomas W. Crockett, was placed in charge of that department following the war. He has since acquired the irrigation phase of the business and continues to operate it under his own name, after inventing and patenting a coupling used in connecting the pipes.

The Williamston plant of Standard Fertilizer Company, Inc., was said to be one of the first industrial plants in the nation to use prisoner of war labor. A temporary prisoner of war stockade was built near the plant and several hundred Italian prisoners of war were moved in first, being replaced in May, 1944, by an equal number of German prisoners, most of the latter group having been members of German Field Marshal Eddie Rommel's elite "Desert Corps," captured in the North African campaign. In addition to being employed at the fertilizer plant here, some of them worked on farms and in the woodyard of the pulp mill near Plymouth, and a few in the logwoods of Bertie County. The only prison camp building remaining is one used as a theater by the prisoners, now part of the Tom Crockett Irrigation, Inc., plant.

In 1949, the Standard firm merged with Mathieson Chemical Corporation, which was then entering a new era of plant expansion and adding new products. The name was changed to Standard Fertilizer Division of Mathieson Chemical Corporation, and an insecticide dust mill was constructed in time for the 1950 crop season. This department was an immediate success, additional warehouse space being added in 1951, with a liquid insecticide mill and even more warehouse space being built in 1952.

The Mathieson Corporation merged with Olin in the early 1950's and fertilizer production continued to grow, necessitating construction of a modern pelletizing plant, which was put in operation at the start of the 1956 season. The new firm was kown as Olin-Mathieson Corporation when the merger became effective, later being called simply "Olin." It continued operations through the 1967 season, when it was announced that operations would cease at the end of August, that year. Some of the key personnel were transferred to other Olin plants throughout the United States, and some elected to remain in the community. Shortly afterwards, Columbian Nitrogen Corporation, of Augusta, Ga., leased the property and operated it for one year, after which it was acquired by The Kerr-McGee firm of Oklahoma. While some of the plant facilities are still in operation, it is being used principally as a distribution point at the present time, most of the manufacturing being done elsewhere.

The production of tar, pitch, and turpentine—usually lumped under the heading of "naval stores"—was the mainstay of the economy in the early days of what was to become Martin County, but by 1930 this had become a lost art, very few people having any knowledge of the processes involved in the production. It was for this reason that John H. Griffin, one of the few persons remaining who had any knowledge of charging and burning a tar kiln, arranged for a demonstration at his farm near Jamesville around the first of March, 1930. It was attended by many school teachers, their pupils, and a number of other interested people of the section. He showed how the "fat" pine lightwood—very little of which is left today—was arranged in the pit, the method of lighting it and preparing the earthen cover so that the tar and pitch could be recovered. Where or when the first kiln was charged and burned in the county is not known, but it is believed the demonstration conducted by Mr. Griffin was the last one.

Although Martin County has been one of the principal peanut-producing counties in the nation since 1900, attempts to operate peanut cleaning and shelling plants were not very successful in the early part of the century. Then it was announced in 1930 that the Columbian Peanut Company was planning to construct a plant in Williamston. This was the third such attempt in the town, the first two having ended in destruction by fire. The first, Virginia-Carolina Peanut Company, was built in 1907 and burned less than four years later in March, 1911. The second, built by a local partnership, was built in 1915 but was burned during the first year of its operation.

The Williamston plant was the 19th for the Columbian Peanut Company, the other 18 being located in several peanut-producing states, including three in this immediate section. It was completed and opened for business in the fall of 1930, under management of W. S. Pritchard. It afforded employment for up to 125 persons, most of them women, at the peak of the season.

After operating the plant for about ten years, the Columbian firm sold it to a local concern, composed of George H. Harrison, Jesse S. Whitley, W. C. Windley, and N. C. Green. Following the death or withdrawal of the other partners, Mr. Green acquired their interests and continues operation of the plant, which has been enlarged and modernized in recent years. In addition to providing a home market and storage facilities for hundreds of peanut farmers in the county, the firm has developed a tremendous sale of miniature bags of cleaned and selected peanuts in two and five-pound sizes.

Announcement was made on February 28, 1936, that the Clark Candy Company was to begin operations the following week in Williamston. Managed by Walter Clark of Plymouth, the firm was reported to have been in business in the north for some time, and was being moved to be nearer the source of the raw products. The plant was located in a building near the intersection of Smithwick and Railroad streets and was to employ 12 people, according to the announcement. It did not remain in operation very long.

The first mention of what was to become Martin County's greatest industrial development was contained in a brief article in the Williamston Enterprise of April 3, 1936, noting that an executive of a New Jersey firm had expressed interest in locating a pulp plant in this section. While passing through Williamston a few days previously, H. M. Kiecklefer, secretary-treasurer of Kiecklefer Contrainer Company, Delair, N.J., had a more or less casual conversation with Mayor John L. Hassell, stating he was making a survey of possible plant sites in the south and was very favorably impressed with this area.

In the ensuing months, George H. Harrison, member of the town board, and others persuaded a number of the company officials, including John W. Kieckhefer, president, to visit Williamston for the purpose of viewing a number of possible sites and studying statistical surveys outlining advantages of the section. Their efforts were successful, and the company decided to locate a plant in this county. A site near Williamston was first chosen, but it was decided it might be subject to flooding, and the Lucas and York properties, located on the Roanoke River and Welch's Creek, the latter being the eastern boundary of Martin County, were finally selected. Announcement was made on December 8, 1936, that the site had been chosen, with work to begin as soon as possible in order to get the plant into operation by the middle of the following year.

Construction on the new industry in the lower part of the county began on January 4, 1937, and was well underway by the middle of March that year. Building has seldom ceased in the years since then. Before the first buildings were completed and equipment installed, plans were being made for improvements and expansion; and this has been the case ever since, except for a brief period during the World War II years, when it became impossible to obtain materials and labor. The plant and its development have completely revolutionized the economy of the county and section, transforming it from strictly rural to one dependent on the co-existence of agriculture and industry. Many of the firm's employees at present do some farming, while others live on their farms but rent the crop acreage to those engaged in large-scale agriculture.

When completed, the first installation was comprised of three so-called "wet machines" which manufactured raw pulp for containerboard, most of which was transported by barges to the New Jersey plant for finishing. The process was continuous, requiring three eight-hour shifts daily, seven days a week, with only occasional periodic shutdowns for inspection and repair of machinery. Regular operations were started October 27, 1937, under the name of North Carolina Pulp Company, a division of Kieckhefer Container Corporation. It was said there were about 300 people in the operating crews, and the total investment—although no figures were cited—is believed to have been not much than $5 million.

In February, 1938, about four months after the plant was put into operation, it was announced that additions costing more than a million dollars would be launched immediately and consideration was being given to constructing a mill to produce finished paper. Within a year, another similar program was announced, one that included construction of a building and installation of machinery for a complete bleaching unit, filtering plant, and equipment to increase output of the mill from 300 tons daily to 550 tons. A little later, two machines were installed to produce finished kraft paper and milk-carton stock, requiring the addition of several hundred employees over those originally needed to operate the plant.

After the war ended in 1945, the company resumed installation of equipment and machinery to modernize the plant and increase its output; but its record growth was not to reach its peak until after a change in ownership. In 1957, the Weyerhaeuser Company, based in Tacoma, Wash., one of the giants in the wood products industry, acquired all the holdings of the North Carolina Pulp Company, including its timberlands and the plant in the lower part of this county, near Plymouth. Within a few years, it launched an expansion program the likes of which had never been seen in eastern Carolina.

Since assuming control in 1957, the new owners have just about completely rebuilt and modernized the plant by streamlining and automating the equipment and processes. They have installed several new departments and divisions for production of entirely new products. Additions that have been made in recent years include the fine paper division, veneer plant, sawmill, and the most recent installation, a unit for making fireplace logs from sawdust. A construction program underway in the spring of 1974 provided for a substantial addition and expansion of the fine paper division, as well as air-pollution control equipment to be housed in a structure equal in height to a 25-story building, believed to be the tallest in eastern North Carolina. Additional plans for even further expansion were announced in July, 1974.

An example of the automatic equipment and machinery in use at the plant in recent years can be seen in the $5½ million sawmill complex, construction of which began in 1970. The five-acre installation includes a log yard, log "merchandiser," debarker, chipper, sawmill, planer, end trimmer, sorting device, and drying kilns. After a tree is felled in the woods, it is trimmed and transported to the log yard in one piece. The "merchandiser" is operated by one man, who decides the most efficient lengths and punches a number of buttons, after which the machine automatically cuts the tree into the specified lengths. Those of pulpwood length are routed to the pulp mill, while the saw logs go directly from the "merchandiser" to the debarker and chipper and then into the sawmill. The extent to which the process has been automated is reflected by the fact that only seven men are required to operate the sawmill itself, and it is capable of producing more than 100,000 board feet of lumber in an eight-hour shift.

Some idea of the tremendous growth of the industry in this county may be gained through some general figures. The original investment was believed to have been around five million dollars. Today it is thought to be well in excess of seventy million, possibly nearing the hundred million mark when inflation is given consideration. There were approximately 300 employees when operations began in the fall of 1937, while today's company is said to have more than 1,500 employees at the plant in the lower part of the county, with hundreds of others in its woodlands and transportation departments. It is by far the largest taxpayer in Martin County, tax revenue from that firm alone now representing approximately one-third of the total county levy.

In addition to its holdings in this county, Weyerhaeuser owns thousands of acres of timberlands elsewhere in the state; and it has also constructed and has in operation a sizable paper mill in Craven County near New Bern, as well as some smaller operations in other parts of the state. Wages paid in the pulp and paper industry are usually among the highest of any industrial operation, making the firm one of the most desirable corporate citizens not only of Martin County but also of the state.

The year 1937 also brought an important addition to the retail business life of the county with the incorporation of a local unit of the Belk-Tyler Company to operate a department store in Williamston. Incorporators were W. H. Belk of Charlotte, A. L. Tyler of Rocky Mount, J. H. Tyler of Kinston, and C. A. Plyler of Williamston, the latter being the first manager of the local store. The firm first occupied the entire first floor of the Tar Heel Building, later constructing a new store just to the west, where it continues to operate, also using half of its original store as an annex.

In March, 1939, the Farmvile-Woodward Lumber Company, which had succeeded Murray & McCabe's sawmill operation at Williamston in the early 1930's, announced addition of a planing mill and a third boiler to its facilities. This created about 30 additional jobs and brought total employment at the plant to around 85, according to Manager Dean Speight. The plant continued in operation in Williamston up past the middle 1940's.

Goldman Package Company, which had offices and plants in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, announced letting of a contract in March, 1940, for construction of a plant to manufacture baskets in Williamston. A 15-acre tract of land at the edge of the M. D. Wilson property near the Roanoke River had been secured and arrangements made for a rail siding. Construction was started at once, estimated cost of the project being given as $100,000. The plant was completed and put into operation in July, 1940, with about 100 employees. However, work had to be suspended for a short time about a month later, due to damage caused by the record flood of August, 1940, part of the plant being under water for several days.

The first of several changes in ownership in succeeding years occurred in February, 1941, when the plant was bought by Williamston Package Manufacturing Company, principal incorporators of which were G. H. Harrison, J. S. Whitley, and N. C. Green of Williamston. That firm manufactured produce baskets for several years and then sold the plant to Marvel Packing Company, which installed new machinery and continued making baskets for a number of years.

Atlas Plywood Corporation next entered the picture, purchasing the plant and changing the equipment to manufacture plywood sheets and panels. The Atlas firm was a national conglomerate which operated plywood manufacturing plants in several states, including at least two others in North Carolina. Operations were continued until early February, 1957, when, for some reason never made clear, the plant here and others in the system were suddenly closed down and the corporation began liquidating its assets.

Learning the plant and equipment were for sale, the Williamston Plywood Company was organized by local people to buy them and resume operations. Incorporators of the new firm were N. C. Green, president; Steve Clary, vice president; and Mrs. Sarah Roberson Manning, secretary and treasurer. The transfer was completed March 20, 1957, the plant reopening several weeks later. It then continued in business, with 85 to 125 persons employed, until December 28, 1969, when an early morning fire destroyed much of the plant and machinery. The loss was estimated at upwards of $100,000, only partially covered by insurance. Due to conditions in the plywood industry since, operations have not been resumed.

The start of World War II in December, 1941, very effectively put a damper on business expansion in practically all fields except those directly connected with the war effort, and the close of the war some four years later marked the beginning of what was essentially a completely new era. During the first half of the century, there were hundreds of small industrial and retail establishments in the county. Comparatively little capital was required, and it was a simple matter to go into business, with a reasonable chance of success. The end of the war marked a turning point in this respect; and in the years since 1945 it has become increasingly necessary to utilize more modern, complex, and expensive machinery and equipment in order to compete successfully, regardless of the field.

Labor has become infinitely more expensive in recent years, and development of the computer has made automation an absolute requirement in many lines—all of which means that more capital is required, putting an independent business undertaking beyond the reach of the average person. Mergers and centralization have become essential in many cases, chain organizations taking over much of the retail business, and conglomerates dominating the industrial scene. A few independents have managed to survive in this world of giants, but they are the exceptions rather than the rule.

All this is cited to partially account for the decline in the number of business establishments in Martin County in recent years. The county reached a peak in population in 1950, the official census showing 27,938 people in the county that year, against 24,730 in the 1970 census, a loss of slightly more than 11 per cent over the 20-year period. Mechanization of farming and decline in the number of small independent business establishments, especially in the field of wood products, account for much of the decrease, many blacks leaving for industrial centers in the north and midwest, where job opportunities appeared more favorable. It is possible that an increase in the number of industrial plants locating in this county during the past decade, many of them units of national organizations, may help reverse this trend.

About the time the war ended in 1945, the Dixie Peanut Company was organized to build a second peanut cleaning and shelling plant in Williamston. The plant had been under consideration for some time, but it had been impossible to obtain priorities earlier to begin construction. Partners in the firm were John A. Manning, Johnnie Gurkin, W. C. Windley, W. R. Edmondson, and Carlyle Langley. The new factor was built just off the Washington highway on the Plymouth branch of the railroad, and opened for business in late October, 1945. It operated only on a part-time basis in recent years, and in the spring of 1974 the property was sold to become part of a low-rent housing development, with the building to be torn down and removed.

A corporation was formed in November, 1945, and the contract let for construction of a freezer locker plant in Williamston. Material shortages delayed construction, and after the building was completed it was impossible to secure delivery of equipment for several months. The business finally opened in September, 1946, under the firm name of Colonial Frozen Foods, Inc. G. H. Harrison was president; D. V. Clayton, treasurer; and Ben D. Courtney, secretary. Other incorporators were J. S. Whitley, Johnny Gurkin, B. S. Courtney, William Everett, Noah Rogerson, C. J. Goodman, N. C. Green, and Harry Phillips, the latter from Raleigh. The business was operated more or less as a cooperative for about four and a half years, when it ran into financial difficulties, and the plant was acquired by Roanoke Lockers, Inc., in March, 1951. Officers of the new firm were A. C. Wullenwaber, president; Henry M. Tyler, vice president and treasurer; and Earl McD. Westbrook, secretary. They were from Dunn, where they were successful operators of one of the larger freezer-locker plants in the state. The local plant was acquired in recent years by Russell Griffin and George Peel, who continue the business under the firm name of Williamston Meat Processing Company.

Messrs. Griffin and Peel have become owners and operators of several other businesses in the Williamston area in recent years. In March, 1952, they bought the business known as Roberson's Slaughter House, located on McCaskey Road, near the railroad crossing just west of Williamston. They modernized its facilities and renamed it Williamston Packing Company, presently serving a wide area with wholesale meat products. In February, 1967, they bought the John Allen Mizelle Red & White Grocery in the West End section of Williamston. They enlarged the building, bought additional parking space, renamed it the IGA Foodliner, and have since developed it into one of the largest and most successful independent supermarket operations in this section of the state. Mr. Griffin and his wife are also owners and operators of the R. & C. Restaurant on Washington Street in Williamston.

One post-war enterprise that has continued operations until the present was nearly two years in the building. Beginning construction in July, 1947, the $100,000 Martin Feed Mill was put into operation in the West End section of Williamston on February 21, 1949, by the owners, W. O. Abbitt and William W. Gurganus. Designed to fit into the agricultural economy of the county, the plant had a capacity of 100 tons daily of premium feeds under its own "Martin" brand or, if desired, mixed to the customers' own specifications.

A business directory of firms operating in Robersonville just prior to the beginning of World War II in 1941 listed the following:

Taylor Mill & Gin Co., R. L. Smith & Sons, Smith's Garage, Robersonville Furniture Co., H. C. Norman Insurance Agency, N. R. Roberson, Grocery Co., Keel Tailoring Co., Guaranty Bank & Trust Co., David Grimes Drug Store, Robersonville Beauty Shop, Johnson Milling Co., Robersonville Mercantile Co., Adler's Department Store, Scott Jewelry Store, Johnson's Service Station, Public Oil Co., Taylor's Dairy, The Weekly Herald, A. O. Roberson & Co., W. M. Wynne Electrical Co., City Barber Shop, Everett & Williams, A. E. Smith Hardware, L. B. Williams & Co.

Firms in Williamston at the same time were: Leslie T. Fowden & J. Paul Simpson, Virginia Electric & Power Co., Roanoke Chevrolet Co., Williamston Motor Co., Proctor Shoppe, Peele's-Jewelers, Roses 5¢ & 10¢ Store, Martin Supply Co., Pittman's, Alpha Cleaners, Darden's Department Store, Woolard Hardware Co., Economy Auto Supply, Farmers Supply Co., E. & W. Grocery Co., B. S. Courtney, N. Israel, Chas. H. Jenkins & Co., Ann's Variety Store, Margolis Brothers, Moore Grocery Co., Pender's, Lindsley Ice Co., The Harrison Shoppe (Mrs. Anna Harrison), W. J. Miller's Western Auto Store, Martin County Building & Loan Association, W. G. Peele Insurance, Modern Beauty Shop, Eagles Stores, Carolina Telephone & Telegraph Co., Good & Bad Furniture Co., Williamston Hardware Co.;

Also Taylor's Dairy, Soda Shop, Clark's Pharmacy, Inc., Economy Auto Store, Moore Grocery Co., Roy Ward Coal & Wood Yard, H. P. Mobley Insurance, Gulf Service Station, Davis Pharmacy, J. L. Peele, Paul Auto Supply, Edgewood Dairy, Williamston Peanut Co., W. E. Old, Sinclair Service Station, Dixie Motors, Harrison & Carstarphen, Willard Shoe Shop, Lindsley Ice Co., Williamston Motor Co., Williamston Supply Co., Harrison Oil Co., J. E. Pope Insurance, and K. B. Crawford,

There is no record of a dairy operation in Martin County until well after the start of the twentieth century. Edgewood Dairy, owned and operated by Wheeler Martin and Frank S. Weaver, Sr., was probably the first, operating a bottling plant and making deliveries on a regular schedule in Williamston in the early 1930's. David Grimes, Sr., had a similar business in Robersonville a short time later; and then the Taylor Dairy, operating from the Van G. Taylor farm in Poplar Point Township, began making deliveries in both Williamston and Robersonville after that.

In October, 1948, Van G. Taylor and his nephew, Van Ralph Taylor, began construction of a building on South Haughton Street for the installation of pasteurization and ice-cream making equipment, as well as sterilizing bottling, and similar machinery. The building was completed and opened in February, 1949, as a retail dairy bar and headquarters for Taylor Dairy. In March, 1953, the building and equipment were sold to Maola Milk & Ice Cream Co. of New Bern, which made it a distribution point for its dairy business in this section. The business grew and the Maola firm later constructed a new and larger building on the highway by-pass and continues its expanded operations there. The Taylor dairy farm continued to function until it suspended operations in the 1960's. J. Linwood Knowles, of the Dardens section in this County, also had a sizable dairy farm in operation for a number of years, but sold the raw milk directly to creamery trucks at his farm. It, too, closed down during the sixties, marking the end of locally owned dairy undertakings in the county.

A sizable lumber mill operation dating back to the mid-thirties came to a close on December 10, 1951, when fire destroyed the Wells-Oates Plant just off East Main Street near the river in Williamston. The business had its beginning March 30, 1935, when J. M. Saunders and M. S. Cox, of Washington, N. C., bought the site from Dr. and Mrs. John F. Thigpen and started a sawmill there shortly afterwards, operating under the firm name of Saunders & Cox. On April 1, 1938, Mr. Saunders became sole owner by purchasing the interests of Mr. Cox, continuing the business under the same firm name. The entire plant, including machinery, equipment, real estate and timber rights, was sold on October 6, 1945, by Mr. Saunders to F. E. Weston, S. A. Mobley, and W. G. Peele. Some six months later, on April 26, 1946, the property was again sold, this time to a partnership consisting of J. W. Wells, Ruth A. Wells, B. H. Oates, and Ruth Oates, trading as Wells-Oates Lumber Co. The firm continued in operation until the 1951 fire, employing about 85 in the plant in Williamston, with another 50 or more in the logwoods dependent upon operations at the mill for their livelihood. The fire was a severe blow to the economy of the county.

An industrial landmark of the county went up in smoke on June 6, 1952, in the burning of Mobley's Mill, located on Highway 125 about five miles north of Williamston. A grist mill first operated by water power in the latter part of the 19th century, it had been modernized after being purchased in May, 1933, by W. O. Abbitt from Warren E. Everett. The mill had become famous for its water-ground corn meal and was known to have been in operation prior to 1890. After it burned in 1952, Mr. Abbitt rebuilt it on a completely new and modern basis, reopening it in June, 1953, and expanding its products to include livestock feeds of all kinds. It has been in continuous operation since.

Governor W. Kerr Scott and First Congressional District Representative Herbert C. Bonner came to Williamston Monday, August 19, 1951, to take part in the opening of Station WIAM, Martin County's first venture in radio broadcasting. A franchise had been issued to S. S. Adcock and Warren Lawlor for the station about two years earlier, but no steps had been taken to put a station in operation until the early part of 1951, when the franchise was bought by three Martin County men—Charles Gray and Jame H. Gray of Robersonville, and H. S. Johnson of Williamston. Robert L. Easley was the first manager, but remained only a few weeks before he was succeeded by "Uncle Rufus" Armstrong. In August, 1953, William H. Farrior and Charles M. Gaylord formed a partnership and bought the station, continuing its operation until Mr. Farrior bought out Mr. Gaylord and became sole owner. The station has expanded its services in recent years, adding FM facilities and modernizing its equipment in other fields.

Williamston became the regional center for operation of the Thurston Motor Lines in November, 1955, when terminal facilities were installed on the Highway 17-13 by-pass. The terminal was designed to handle the firm's freight traffic on a daily basis to and from Williamston, Plymouth, Edenton, Hertford, Windsor, Elizabeth City, Washington, and Belhaven. In addition to its warehouse building, the company put in a repair shop and scheduled operations at the terminal on a 24-hour basis.

Construction work was completed and a liquid alum plant of the American Cyanamid Company was put into operation in the lower part of the county in July, 1956. It was located on land adjacent to the plant then owned by North Carolina Pulp Company and later acquired by the Weyerhaeuser Company who sold the property. Much of its product is piped directly into the pulp plant to be used in the manufacture of paper. Amost completely automated, the new plant employed relatively few people, but represented a substantial investment by the parent company.

A number of county business men got together in the early part of 1957 to sponsor a movement for building and operating a food processing plant. A stock sale was launched to finance the venture, and after about $90,000 worth of stock had been subscribed, an organization meeting was held in April to elect officers and empower them to build a plant and purchase the needed equipment. The board of directors included farmers and businessmen from all sections, as follows: Fate Baker of Palmyra; J. T. Griffin and Coy Griffin of Griffins Township; J. L. Knowles of Dardens; C. U. Rogers, H. L. Barnhill, W. I. Skinner, George W. Corey, Charles H. Manning, Elbert S. Peel, Jr., Henry Winslow, R. Vernon Bunting, Fred Hoskins, Jos. W. Griffin, T. Marvin Britton, C. F. Harris of Williamston; George Oglesby of Hamilton; Lawrence Hyman of Oak City; R. C. Malone of Bear Grass; Robert James of Robersonville; Roy Lowe of Lewiston; George L. Mardre of Windsor; and W. C. Truitt of Tabor City, the latter named to manage the operation. George W. Corey was elected president of the corporation; H. L. Barnhill, vice president; and Jos. W. Griffin, secretary-treasurer.

A site was secured on the railroad just south of the Highway 13, 17-64 by-pass in Williamston, and construction was completed in time for the plant to be put into operation in September, 1957, with 57 employees, under the firm name of Martindale Foods, Inc. The plant did very well for several years, although handicapped to some extent by a shortage of working capital, developing a favorable market for the "Martindale" brand name. After folding as a cooperative effort, operations were continued for a time by several different firms and invididuals under a lease arrangement allowing them to use the established brand name. The plant finally closed down completely in the late 1960's, much of the equipment being sold and moved away.

Construction was started during 1957 on a large poultry-processing plant in Robersonville. Organized and operating under the name of Austin Farms, it opened in the early part of 1958, with a weekly processing capacity of 400,000 fowls. That plant and the Martindale plant at Williamston were both formally dedicated the same day, April 23, 1958, when Governor Luther Hodges and other state and national dignitaries spoke at programs held in the two towns, at Williamston in the morning and in Robersonville that afternoon. Vance L. Roberson was president of the Robersonville firm; Sherwood L. Roberson was vice president; Paul Roberson, treasurer; and Charles Wilson, treasurer. Austin Williams served as executive vice president and was in direct charge of production at the plant. The entire operation was sold to Central Soya of Athens, Inc., a Mid-Western corporation, in July, 1966. The plant was modernized and has been operated continuously since then by that firm.

Many of the major oil companies have maintained distribution points in Martin County for petroleum products for a good many years. Williamston was originally the main distribution center, availability of water transportation by the Roanoke River contributing to location there by a number of the companies. This has become of lesser importance in latter years, although the Texas Company still serves its large Williamston installation by boats.

In 1958, Williamston, Robersonville, and Oak City had a combined storage capacity of 2,870,000 gallons of petroleum products. There were more than 100 service stations in the county at that time, with in excess of 300 employees; and the investment in plants, equipment, and stations amounted to more than two million dollars. All this has been increased in recent years. The 1958 recapitulation showed the Texaco distributors were operating eight delivery trucks, Esso had seven, Pure Oil had three, and Sinclair, two.

Since that time a number of changes have taken place. Baker Oil Company of Williamston now handles the Exxon products, formerly called Esso; Bertie-Martin Oil Company, formerly dealer for Pure Oil products, is now the Union "76" distributor; and N. C. Green Oil Company, which formerly had the Sinclair line, is now the Phillips 66 distributor for the area. Harrison Oil Company in Williamston and Robersonville Oil Company in Robersonville continue with the Texaco line. Harrell Oil Company, Robersonville, handles American Oil Company products; and Public Oil Company, Robersonville, is distributor for Phillips 66 in that section. Whitfield Oil Company handles home heating oil and other products for the Hamilton area.

A $100,000 feed and grain plant, located about a mile west of Hamilton on N. C. Highway 125, was completed and began operations in August, 1957. Incorporators of the firm, Farmers Feed & Grain Company, were H. S. Johnson, W. Clayton House, H. C. House, and B. L. House, all of Hamilton. The plant was one of the first in the county to provide a market for bulk sales of corn and soybeans. Mr. Johnson later acquired the interests of the other members of the firm and continues to operate the business in his own name.

In one of the lightest votes on record, and by a narrow margin at that, Martin County citizens on November 24, 1959, voted to levy a tax on themselves to create an economic development commission to go after more industry for the county. Only 736 votes were cast in the special county-wide election, 435 being for and 301 against the proposal, the majority in favor being 134.

Under provisions approved by the election, the county commissioners were empowered to appoint members of the commission, which was to employ an industrial engineer on a full-time basis whose job would be to do all possible to secure additional industry for the county. A tax levy of not to exceed 5 cents on each $100 in property valuation was authorized to pay for expenses of the commission and its executive officer.

The county commissioners, at their February meeting in 1960, appointed 13 members to the Martin County Economic Development Commission—one each from the 10 townships and three at large—as follows, terms being staggered: V.B. Hairr, Jamesville; Wendell Griffin, Williams; J. Wilford Griffin, Griffins; J. Rossell Rogers, Bear Grass; Charles Gaylord, Williamston; Woolard Peel, Cross Roads; Donnie Hardison, Robersonville; Mayo Hardison, Poplar Point; W.C. House, Hamilton; Nat W. Johnson, Goose Nest; at large members: George W. Corey, Williamston; County commissioner H.S. Johnson of Hamilton, and County Attorney E.S. Peel, Jr., of Williamston. The commission then elected Donnie Hardison chairman; J. Wilford Griffin, secretary; and J. Rossell Rogers, treasurer. W.J. Heard was the first executive director of the commission, serving for several years. Following his resignation, Rush W. Bondurant, who had retired from the Standard Fertilizer Division of Olin Corporation, served for some time before moving to Florida. Percy A. Price, a former manager of the Beaunit operation near Hamilton, was next appointed ex-executive director and continues in that position to this time. Under his leadership the commission has had an important role in securing several new industries for various parts of the county in recent years.

A charter was issued in June, 1958, for the Robville Manufacturing Company, Robersonville, N.C., and the firm opened for business there early in July of the same year. The firm was organized by Morris Goodis, of Long Island, N.Y., who, with Bella Goodis and Aileen Rubenstein, also of Long Island, N.Y., comprised the board of directors. Other incorporators were Nora R. Ward, Paul D. Roberson, and E.B. Whichard, all of Robersonville. Opening with about 40 employees engaged in the manufacture of children's wearing apparel, it continued to grow and expand its operations until more than 150 were given work there, most of them women. In January, 1965, the business was acquired by Blue Gem Manufacturing Company, which operated several other plants in North Carolina engaged in the manufacture of women's and children's clothing. It was renamed Southern Apparel Company and has continued its operations in Robersonville since, constructing and occupying its own new $1,000,000 building on East Third Street Extension there in the early 1970's. The new building enabled the firm to increase its work force form 200 to 400, it was stated at the time.

A business which had been a fixture in the commercial history of Williamston and Martin County for more than four score years ceased operations in July,19, 1960, when Warren H. Biggs, going into retirement, closed the doors of Biggs Drug Store and turned the keys of the building over to its owners. The firm had its begining on October 12, 1879, when the first Samuel Romulus Biggs, after clerking for Elder C.B. Hassell and receiving his druggist training under Dr. Thomas Pugh, opened for business in an old wooden building located on the south side of Main Street at the same site where the store finally closed its doors nearly 81 years later. Several of the firm's store buildings were destroyed or severely damaged by fire over the years, but each time the store was restored on a larger and better basis, the present building having been built in 1892.

The elder S. Romulus Biggs, first known druggist in this section had three of his sons—Warren H., S. Romulus, Jr., and Jack W.—to follow him in the drug business here. Several physicians had their offices at the rear of the store at various times, and it served more or less as a small hospital on occasion, victims of gunshot wounds, assaults, and accidents being given temporary shelter there while first-aid treatment was administered. It is known that even several limb amputations took place in those offices. The three Biggs brothers studied at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, and were licensed pharmacists after passing the state examinations. They were well versed in state, national, and international affairs, their store also serving as a general meeting place and forum for political discusions for many years, as well as a center for dissemination of local news and gossip of the moment. After closing the store in 1960, Warren H. Biggs moved the few drugs remaining in stock to his home on Smithwick Street and continued to serve a few of his friends and former customers for the remainder of his life.

Although not actually located in Martin County, considerable interest was created in this section in May, 1960, when an announcement was made by the Voice of America of a multi-million dollar project, part of which was to be located about four miles from Bear Grass, just over the line in Beaufort county. The project was to include three units, two powerful transmitters and one receiver, total cost of which was to be about $6,000,000. The facilities were to replace two installations each in New Jersey and New York, and were designed to transmit, through the most powerful radio equipment in existence, the story of the American Way of Life in a range of 39 languages beamed to all portions of the earth. This area was chosen for the installations becaue of the availability of non-farm lands where interference with other services would be at a minimum. The installation near Bear Grass was completed and put into operation about two years later. The other two installations were in Pitt County, one near Greenville.

One of the tobacco warehouses in Williamston was remodeled into an industrial building, starting in July, 1960, after an argreement was signed by the Williamston Industrial Development Corporation with the June Day Manufacturing Company, most of the officials of which were residents of New York City. Work on renovating the Carolina Warehouse building was completed in the latter part of 1960, but the firm experienced delays in obtaining delivery of needed machinery and equipment, and it was not until February, 1961, that it was able to begin operations, and then on a limited scale. Schools were set up to train operators of its machines, and the business gradually expanded until the number of employees passed the 100 mark. Manufacturing ladies' sportswear and bathing apparel, the business continues to grow and is an important factor in the increasing industrial development of the town and country. Paul Pulver, of New York, came here to supervise installation of the plant and equipment and has continued as manager since.

Led by the Martin County Economic Development Commission, much of the first half of the year 1961 was devoted to a concerted effort to raise a cash contribution of $150,000 as an inducement for location of a multi-million-dollar textile plant in the county. In addition to the economic development commission, the campaign was backed by local chambers of commerce, civic clubs, and leading citizens in all sections of the county. After some $125,000 had been pledged and extended negotiations had been completed, announcement was made from the office of Governor Terry Sanford in Raleigh on July 11, 1961, that Beaunit Mills, Inc., of New York, would locate a plant near Hamilton which would ultimately provide jobs for from 500 to 700 persons.

The governor said Irwin S. Meltzer, president of Beaunit, had advised him that the concern planned to have the new Hamilton facility in full operation by January 1, 1962. Governor Sanford also stated, "We consider the company an old and valued friend, as for many years Beaunit Mills has operated plants in Lowell, Statesville, and Rockingham. This is great news not only for eastern North Carolina but for all North Carolina. This fine company is one of the oldest and best known in the textile field, and I am glad to extend to President (Irwin S.) Meltzer and his associates a hearty welcome to eastern North Carolina as it continues its expansion program in our state."

Construction work on the plant, designed to manufacture knitted synthetic yarn, was started shortly afterwards on a 47-acre tract of land located on Highway 125, just east of the city limits of Hamilton. The modern main building contained about 180,000 square feet of floor space. While it was not possible to get the plant into operation by January 1, 1962, as originally planned, the first machines were started up in early February, full production being achieved later in the year. In June, 1972, officials announced an expansion program, the building being enlarged by about 25 per cent and 53 positions being added. The plant handles knitting, dyeing, and finishing operations. Other facilities have been added since the plant first began operations, and in the spring of 1974 construction was underway on a low-cost housing project near the plant, its facilities to be made available to plant employees and others.

Another substantial textile operation was announced for Martin County on May 28, 1968, when Jefferson Mills made known its plan to build a mill near Williamston, with the ultimate objective of employing about 300 persons in its operations. Jefferson Mills was the name of the operating division of Kahn & Feldman, Inc., a yarn-processing company, with headquarters in New York. The announcement was made jointly by Gerald W. Frank, president, of New York; and Earl G. Hill, vice president, of Pulaski, Va., where the firm had another plant.

Construction of the new plant was started shortly after the announcement, the site selected including about 50 acres of land a little less than two miles north of Williamston on Highway 125. The main building had about 150,000 square feet of floor space for production and warehouse purposes, all air conditioned except the warehouse area. Limited production got underway in the new plant early in 1969, and by April 1st employment was in excess of 125 and increasing slowly but steadily. James Walker, III, was manager of the plant, and B. F. Fountain was personnel director.

In March, 1970, it was announced that Jefferson Mills was planning to enlarge the plant by 100,000 additional feet of floor space, contract for the addition to be awarded on or about April 15. The plant had reached full production about two months prior to the announcement, with 250 employees on the payroll. The new employment potential was said to be 450. Then in June, 1970, Manager Walker announced the firm was going to build a childcare and development center at the plant to take care of the children of working mothers, not only those employed by Jefferson Mills but others as well. The unit was to have eight rooms, including a completely equipped kitchen, and would be able to take care of 65 to 75 pre-school children between the ages of 2 and 6 years during each eight-hour shift. In July of 1970, the firm announced that along with the expansion of its physical plant, in a spirit of generosity and cooperation, it was contributing $25,000 to the Martin County General Hospital to aid in the construction of a third story at that facility.

Industrial development in the Robersonville section received a double shot in the arm in October and November, 1969, when announcements were made by two concerns that they had selected sites in that section for location of new plants. Both sites were on U. S. Highways 13-64 east of Robersonville, one about a mile and the other about a mile and a half from the town limits. County and town officials agreed to work together to provide water and sewer facilities for the new plants, the county erecting a new water tank near the sites and the town extending its lines to the town limits to serve them. The county economic development commission had an important part in helping to secure the new industries, working with the chamber of commerce, civic organizations, and local people in conducting labor surveys and developing other factors that induced the two firms to choose the Robersonville locations.

Robersonville Products Company was the first to announce its intention to locate near Robersonville, that announcement coming during the week of October 19, 1969. Although a subsidiary of a national organization, the plant was to operate under its local name, manufacturing a quality line of display fixtures for retail stores. Construction of its steel building containing 60,000 square feet of floor space, did not get underway until March of the following year, due to a special design being required. It was completed and work was begun on a small scale during the latter part of 1970. It was said that about 50 employees would be required initially, with about 150 on the payroll when the plant reached full production. Several additions have been made to the plant within the past few years, including one in 1973 that more than doubled its original size. It is located on the north side of U.S. Highways 13-64 at the railroad crossing about a mile east of Robersonville.

Plans to build a shoe manufacturing plant on the south side of Highways 13-64 about a mile and a half east of Robersonville were announced the week of November 8, 1969. Named Blue Ridge Shoe Company, the firm was a division of the Melville Shoe Corporation, the president of which, Richard E. West of Nashua, N.H., made the announcement. Construction began shortly afterwards on a modern building of 64,000 square feet, designed for employment of 300 persons when full production was reached. The first pair of shoes came off the assembly line at the plant July 26, 1970, and by May of the following year, when an "open house" was held to enable people of the area to view its operations, 225 persons, were reported to be on the payroll there. The Robersonville unit manufactures children's shoes, many of which are sold through the Thom McAn, Miles, Meldisco, and other retail stores.

In December, 1970, it was announced that Sandra Manufacturing Company, Inc., would open a sewing plant in the building formerly occupied by the Chevrolet agency in Robersonville and would provide employment for 50 to 75 people, mostly women. The firm is a subsidiary of the Rocky Mount Undergarment Company. It opened in Robersonville around the first of the year 1971 and has been in operation since, manufacturing ladies' and children's undergarments.

The Union Camp Corporation spent an estimated $100,000 in developing a woodyard with a steel bulkhead on the Roanoke River a short distance below the bridge at Williamston during the early summer of 1972. It was to be used for storing and loading logs and pulpwood on barges for transportation to that concern's pulp and paper mills. Construction was completed, and the facility was put into operation a short time later.

The Martin County industrial community received another substantial addition in 1972, when Coats & Clark, Inc., a Delaware corporation with main offices in New York, announced plans on

October 19 for a $2,000,000 zipper plant to be located just east of the Jamesville city limits. Construction began almost immediately, and a training program for employees was established at the same time. It was announced that the plant would provide employment for an estimated 250 persons when it reached full employment.

Just a few days over a year later, the plant began operations, on October 23, 1973, and has been increasing its production since that time. The main building contains 90,500 square feet of floor space. The site includes nearly 36 acres, and President Robert G. Laidlaw, who came to the county to announce plans for the plant, said at the time that a dyeing plant was under consideration for the same area. Originally separate firms manufacturing sewing thread in Scotland, the Coats and Clark concerns merged after beginning operations in the United States following the Civil War. The firm has a number of plants in the south, including six in Georgia, one in Virginia, one in South Carolina, and the one at Jamesville.

Several shopping centers in Williamston and Robersonville, subject of tentative planning and discussions for a number of years, began to take on reality in the years 1972 and 1973. Opening April 18, 1973, the Be-Lo Shopping Center in Robersonville was first, work on it having been started in October of the preceding year. Located only one block east of Main Street on the north side of Highways 13-64, the center includes four firms—Be-Lo Supermarket, Mast Drug Store, Super-Dollar Store, and Little Mint Restaurant and Drive-In. The project was developed by some of the principal stockholders of Be-Lo Markets, Inc., of Norfolk, Va., and was estimated to have cost around $300,000. Work on a similar center for Williamston was started the latter part of January, 1973, the two Martin County stores being the first in North Carolina for the Be-Lo organization, which then operated 37 markets in the Tidewater Virginia section.

The year 1973 saw the start of work on three shopping centers in Williamston. The Be-Lo center was the first to get underway, and its opening was held September 19, 1973, with four units in operation, two others having been added since. The first four stores to open at the center were the Family Dollar Store, the Pic 'N Pay Shoe Store, the Fabric Shop, and the Be-Lo Supermarket. The South Seas Pet Shop opened a little later, and the Proud Peacock, a new women's wear shop, was opened in the summer of 1974. According to the developers, other units will be added as required.

Work began on the largest single store building in any of the projects in May, 1973, when ground was broken for a Grant City Department Store in Williamston. Containing over 53,000 square feet of floor space, it was to be the main establishment in Grant Plaza Shopping Center, a plot of about 9½ acres of land with 600 feet of frontage on South Washington Street Extension in front of E. J. Hayes School. The project was handled by E. G. & S. Metro Development-Construction Company, a West Coast firm with branch offices in several sections of the United States, but the property was later acquired by B-P Realty Company, a Williamston firm. The center has a hard-surfaced parking area for more than 400 vehicles, as well as space for several additional stores. The Grant City store opened February 18, 1974, and was the only one there up to the middle of 1974, though others were said to be under consideration.

Construction began in July, 1973, on Martin Plaza, the largest of the four shopping centers in total space and number of major stores. The Plaza fronts on the Williamston by-pass at the intersection of U. S. Highways 13-17 and 64, diagonally across from the National Guard Armory. Masten-Faison-Weatherspoon Realty Company, Charlotte, N. C., handled the project while construction was underway. There were seven units in the original building, with five of them under lease before construction was completed. The first unit, of 9,000 square feet of floor space, was completed and occupied by the Sears order office on May 23, 1974. Winn-Dixie Supermarket occupied the second, of 20,000 square feet of floor space, opening on September 2, 1974. Others under lease, to be occupied as soon as completed, included Roses Department Store, 45,000 square feet; People's Drug Store, 15,000 square feet; and three smaller units, totaling 11,000 square feet, one of which was leased by Heath's Jewelry Store. The other two small units had not been leased at the time the center was nearing completion.

Most of the occupants of the four new shopping centers are establishments new to the area, only five of the sixteen firms moving from other locations in the same town. At the Robersonville center, only the Little Mint was an established firm moving to a new location, the other three, Be-Lo Supermarket, Mast Drug Store, and Super-Dollar Store, all being new to the town.

At the Be-Lo Shopping Center in Williamston, the Fabric Shop moved from another location, but Be-Lo Supermarket, Pic 'N Pay Shoe Store, Family Dollar Store, South Seas Pet Shop, and the Proud Peacock were all newcomers. Grant City Department Store, of course, was a new firm at the Grant Plaza Shopping Center. Roses, Sears, and Heath's Jewelry Stores moved from uptown locations in Williamston to the new Martin Plaza Shopping Center, while Winn-Dixie and People's Drug Store were newcomers to the town.

There were at least three business firms in Williamston in 1974 which had their beginnings before the dawn of the 20th century. The exact date when it began business has not been established; but the Biggs Funeral Home, presently owned and operated by William W. Biggs, began rendering its service some years prior to 1900, some of the time in its earlier years as part of the Biggs Drugs Company business. Peele's Jewelers, now owned and operated by R. E. Peele, has been in the same family since it opened in 1899. The Enterprise, presently a semi-weekly newspaper owned and operated by the Mannings, also came into existence in 1899, but it has had several owners in the intervening years. Originally a weekly, it came into possesion of the Manning family in 1908.

It is believed that more than 1,000 individuals and firms have been engaged in business of one kind or another since the start of the present century. It should be emphasized that this figure is simply an estimate, and no complete listing is obtainable. Some of the businesses lasted for only a few weeks or months, others for a long period of years. In more recent years, telephone and other directorys have made it possible to secure a fairly accurate list for the larger towns, but no such sources are available for the county as a whole. No information is available as to the type of business or industry in which some of the individuals and firms were engaged, names in the lists which follow having been obtained from various sources, including old statements, legal papers, newspapers advertisements and articles, directorys of several kinds, and private mailing lists.

Oil distribution firms are included, but no effort was made to secure names of filling stations and their operators, since there were so many of them as to make the task almost impossible. Most are probably mentioned in other categories, anyway, and such a list would be constituted principally of duplications. Possibly the first gasoline pump in the county was located at the

C. D. Carstarphen & Company store in Williamston. The pump was hand operated, the gasoline being dispensed directly from the drums or barrels in which it had been brought up the river by boats.

Arranged by localities, the following individuals and firms have been engaged in business of one kind or another in Martin County since 1900, in addition to many which are mentioned elsewhere in this history:

Bear Grass: O. K. Cowing & Co., J. B. Harris & Co., J. Rogers Brothers, Herman Rogers, Terry Bros., Clover Farm Store, Leroy Harrison Garage;

Everetts: Everetts Mercantile Co., J. D. Barnhill & Co., Bailey & Barnhill, Taylor, Bailey & Bro., Champion Auto Co., Mobley & Browning, Bailey & Barnhill, V. G. Taylor, J. R. Barnhill, Barnhill Bros., J. S. Ayers & Co., Paul Bailey, W. F. Crawford, J. S. Peel & Co., H. M. Ayers & Co.;

Gold Point: Taylor & Pippin, S. G. Taylor, James A. Johnson Insurance Co., Croom Refrigeration Co., Inc., Vanderford Store, Everett Grocery;

Hamilton: Mrs. J. B. Cherry, V. R. Taylor, Hamilton Milling Co., Baker & Salsbury, R. W. House & Bro., T. B. Slade, Jr., Hamilton Supply Co., George S. Haislip, Johnson Mercantile Co., Ledo Farms Nursery, Hamilton Livestock Market, Everett-Matthews Equipment Co., Allene Beauty Shop, Ellen's Beauty Shop, Lucy's Beauty Salon, Warren's Shoe Repair Shop, Hamilton IGA, Everett Insurance Agency, Whitfield Oil Co., Keel Peanut Co., Hamilton Grill, Ward Bros. Radio & TV Repair, R. J. Sydenstricker;

Hassell: F. L. Haislip, Hassell Gin Co., Salsbury Supply Co., L. W. Pierce Store, John W. Eubanks;

Jamesville: Davenport & Moore, Warren W. Walters, C. A. Askew, U. S. Hassell, Davenport & Hamilton, G. M. Anderson, J. R. Manning, A. Corey, L. W. Hardison & Roy Williams, C & W Tile Co., Jesse Leggett Contract Hauling, Sexton's Store, Hardison Farm Supply, Mary's Flower Shop, Friendly Grocery, Buck Overton's Rivers Edge Restaurant, D. R. Hardison & Son, Wolfe Industries, Carolina Barbecue, Community Beauty Shop, Charlotte Hair Styling, O. W. Hamilton, Maurice Brown Grocery, Barber's Upholstery Shop, Well's Grocery, I.N.S. Sexton's;

Oak City: Joe Bunting & Co., Oak City Oil Co., Hyman Grocery, Bunting's Car Service, Turner's Auto Service, Dianne's Beauty Shop, Mary Sue's Beauty Shop, Cecil Boddie Building Contractor, Oak City Dry Cleaners, Bunting & Worsley Milling Co., Eastern Farm Products, Mar-Lynn's Florist, Bunting & Son, Haywood Harrell Store, N. W. Johnson Insurance Agency, Bunting's Soda Shop, Bunting Tractor Co., W. G. Keel;

Robersonville: G. A. Guilford, D. B. Parker Buggy Co., W. W. Waters, G. D. & J. C. Roberson, C. H. Rawls, M. P. Smith, Grimes, Roberson & Co., George W. Smith, Whitehurst Lumber Co., Thornton Melody Shop, Hyman Warren, Cox Motor Co., Harris Motor Co., Robersonville Motor Co., W. A. Everett & Co., David Grimes Drug Store, A. R. Johnson, C. T. Smith & Co., Janie Flemming Hat Shoppe, Taylor Mill & Gin Co., Fulmer's Lunch, Rogerson Bros., Robersonville Publishing Co., Trio Theatre, J. Holt Evans, J. H. James & Co., C. L. Wilson & Co., H. C. Woolard, Peoples Trading Co., Roberson Poultry Co., Roberson's Funeral Home, L. B. Williams & Co., Last & Awl Shoe Repair Shop, Sundown Drive-In Theatre, Robersonville Tractor Co.

John L. House, Drift Inn Cafe, Robersonville Storage Co., B & T Tire Co., Robersonville Shelling Co., H. & H. Gas Co., Robersonville Oil Co., Public Oil Co., K & L Supply Co., Ashley D. Wynne, R. Frank Everett Equipment Co., Success Planning Co., Mutual Tobacco Barn Fire Insurance Association, William S. Johnson, Sundown Theatre, Smith Hardware Co., Wynne-Green Peanut Market, The Little Mint, Mattco Gift Shop, Smith-Johnston Co., E. G. Anderson & Associates, Carolina Peanuts of Robersonville, Inc., Quality Motors, Inc., R & R Salvage Co., Monty's Beauty Court, Our Beauty Shoppe, Town & Country Beauty Salon, Andrews & Son Billiard Room, Matthews Floor Covering Service, Royal Cleaners, Robersonville Ice & Coal Co., Fulcher's Department Store, Mast Drug Co., McArthur's FCX, Robersonville Feed Mill.

Williams' Fish Market, City Flower Shop, Biggs Funeral Home, Pargas of Robersonville, Robersonville Oil & Gas Co., Council Manson Store, K & M Discount House, Mack Mobley, Robersonville Grain Co., Be-Lo Markets, Inc., Joyce Haislip, Jay's Grocery, Keel's Grocery, Walter Keel's Grocery, William A. Leggett Grocery, J. L. Mobley Store, E. R. Rawls Grocery, Rogers Grocery, Williams Red & White Store, Knox Hardware Co., Brown's Roofing & Heating Co., E. B. Whichard Insurance Agency, J. R. Crandall Insurance Agency, Everett Insurance Agency, Village Jewelers, Smithfield Packing Co., National Finance Co., Romar Corp., F & H Mobile Homes, Robersonville Packing Co., Jasper L. Moore Painting Contractor, Harry T. Gray Peanut Buying Station, Wynne-Green Peanut Co., Robersonville Plumbing Service, Roy's Restaurant, Your Restaurant, Whitaker's Sandwich Shop, Griffins Shoes, Williams Taxi Service, Lipinski TV Repair, J. H. Gray, Sr., Real Estate, B & T Tire Co., Vanderford's Tire Service, Pope's 5 & 10c Store, Super Dollar Store, Grimes Welding & Repair Service, Worsley's Welding & Machine Service, Rhea-Sans, Farmers Supply Co., Carson's 5 & 10c Store, White's 5 & 10c Store, Moye & Morris, Better Chevrolet Co., Robersonville Drug Co., Plymouth Sales & Service, Silas House, Adler Dollar Store, A. R. Osborne, Eastern Telephone Co., H. L. Roberson & Co., Taylor & Haislip, Robersonville Cash Grocery Co., M. K. Mobley, H. C. Woolard, Worthington's 5c to $5 Store, Frozen Delight, A. E. Smith, Donnie M. Hardison Insurance, Taylor's Grill, Miles Chevrolet Co., Manning Chevrolet Co., J. D. Moore's Barber Shop, Norman & Sharp;

Williamston: W. H. Biggs Clothing, Eli Gurganus, N. S. Peel & Co., Wheeler Martin & Dennis S. Biggs, Whitmore & Newell, J. L. Woolard Machine Shop, J. B. Peele & Co., Dillahunt & Sitterson, Kirby's Store, Knight's Restaurant, J. H. Tucker, Slade, Andrews & Co., John Lee Chinese Laundry, F. K. Hodges, Martin Livestock Co., Anderson, Hassell & Co., Mizell & Brown, George R. Dixon, Ed F. Huffines & Co., J. W. Watts Ice House, Fowden & Coburn, W. M. Wilson, Williamston Ginning & Milling Co., Simpson Hardware Co., William Slade, Keith & Godwin, Mrs. Henrietta Bateman, Williamston Bargain House, Harrison Bros. & Co., Mrs. George W. Blount, S. C. Ray, Bagwell's Store, Cowen & Mizell, S. H. Ellison & Co., Nicholson & Co., Alexander Corey & Co., Southern Supply Co., S. R. Clary & Co., S. Rome Biggs, Jr., Herbert D. Peele, J. W. Hardison & Co., A. D. Mizell, Jr., Claude C. Wilson, J. S. Cooke & Co., J. L. & C. B. Hassell, Edgar B. Ewell, Critcher & Co., S. W. Harrell, T. C. Cooke Blacksmith, J. A. Whitley, Gurganus & Son, K. B. Crawford, Anderson, Crawford & Co.,

J. L. Hassell & Co., M. M. Critcher, S. W. Harrell Restaurant, J. W. Watts & Co., Charlie Sing Laundry, J. A. Mizell & co., Crystal Shaving Parlor, Williamston Pressing Club, J. B. McGowan, Don Godwin Laundry Service, J. B. Speller, C. W. Keith & Co., G. B. Simpson, York, Hayes Co., The Triadic Barber Shop, Hing Kee's Laundry, Alfred Petford, Harrison & Cowing Co., Roanoke Cafe, O. C. Price & Co., Macht Bros. & Rutenberg, Simpson & Bro., Williamston Milling & Ginning Co., Fred W. Manese, F. K. Hodges & Co., J. R. Walker, City Market, Brown & Hodges, Frank F. Fagan Insurance, City Barber Shop, Charles Hassell, Society Pressing Club, W. J. Hodges Grocery, Charles Hassell Insurance, N. S.

Peel & Co., J. Paul Simpson, Oakhurst Poultry Farm, W. H. Williams Bicycle Shop and Painter, Bon-Ton Cafe, City Furniture Co., A. K. Hatem, Martin County Buggy Co., Hoyt Hardware Co., Mrs. Mattie Speller, John E. Pope, E. P. Bunch, J. N. Norris, Tinsmith, Leslie T. Fowden,

Saunders & Fowden, M. J. James, Williamston Electric Company, Williamston Telephone Co., J. B. Hopkins, Waters & White, Mrs. McG. Taylor, D. D. Stalls, Biggs Iron & Motor Co., Walter R. Orleans, Rutenberg & Adler, J. D. Slade Undertaking Establishment, B. S. Courtney Furniture Co., R. G. Harrison's Southern Real Estate, Loan & Trust Co., Fowden & Hassell, J. H. Purvis Livery Stable, Theo Roberson & Co., Blount Manufacturing Co. , George W. Blount Variety Store, J. O. Manning Grocery, Jesse T. Price, Waters & White, Watts Garage, York & Peele, M. S. Moore Lighting Equipment, W. H. Gurkin Florist, Harrison Piano Co., Mrs. L. C. Robertson, Alphin-Dunn Plumbing Co., Margolis Bros. & Brooks (later Margolis Bros.), Strand Theatre (later Watts Theatre), B. R. Barnhill, Stalls & Harrison, Barnhill's Garage, Simon Lilley Printing,

Williamston Cooperage Co., E. M. Gordy Bakery, Asa T. Crawford, O. T. Newton & W. S. Manning Meat Market, J. H. Roebuck, Gray & Gray, Ideal Cleaning Works, Young Mercantile Co., Eli Gurganus & Son, Williamston Baking Co., Culpepper Hardware Co., J. F. Thigpen, C. O. Moore & Co., Mrs. S. C. Ray Cafe, Williamston Electric Shoe Shop, Nassef Department Store, Clark-Bennett Drug Co., Pope & Purvis Service Shop, Williamston Lunch Room (J. K. Rogerson), Pender's Yellow Front Store, J. Lawrence Peele, Roanoke Supply Co., W. E. Dunn Plumbing & Heating Co., F. L. Edwards Mortician, W. S. Faulk Ice & Fish Co., W. I. Skinner & Co., Lindsley Ice Co., Browning's Cafe, McCall's 5c and 10c Store, Jones Electric Shop, W. G. Peele, Clark's Drug Store, Peel Motor Co., (John A.) Manning Grocery Co., Williamston Supply Co., Virginia Electric & Power Co., Chas. A. James & Co., W. D. Ambers Soda Shop, O. S. Anderson & Co., Barnhill Bros. & Co., John W. Manning, Electrical Contraactor, Murray & McCabe.

J. H. Ward Market, B. F. Perry, Paul P. Peel Soda Shop, Bowen Bros., Williamston Bargain Store, Eck's Billiard Parlor, Norfolk Underselling Co., Gold Star Store, Roses 5c-10c-25c Store, Jenkins' Service Barber Shop, Value Store, D'Amour's Photographic Studio, Moye & Morris, J. C. Leggett, Sally Ann Bakery, Davis Pharmacy, VanDyke Furniture Co., Woolard Furniture Co., J. R. Everett, Darden's Department Store, K. G. Strawbridge, Colonial Beauty Salon, Martin FCX Service, Good & Bad Furniture Co., S. Ganderson & Sons, J. Eason Lilley, Thigpen & Cherry, Roanoke Chevrolet Co., Eastern Bond & Mortgage Co., Henry D. Harrison, Woman's Shop, A. B. Rogerson, Joshua L. Coltrain, Kate B. York Florist, Sanitary Grocery Co., Rhodesia Real Estate, Co., Henry S. Manning, Proctor Shoppe, Willard's Shoe Shop, Bounds' 5-10c to $1 Store, Norman K. Harrison, City Market, Sunnyside Inn, W. I. Skinner Oil Co., Farmville-Woodward Lumber Co., Biggs Funeral Home, John Enright, Shain & Israel, Big Four Garage.

J. G. Staton Cotton Gin, Harrison & Carstarphen, Williamston Hardware Co., W. E. Old, John A. Manning Peanut Co., Peacock Livestock Co., Dennis Hardy, R. L. Ward Coal & Wood Co., Barnhill & Corey, Koger Radio & Refrigerator Co., M & W Grocery, Nu-Bu-T Shoppe, G. W. Hardison, Gurganus & Fowden Soda Shop, Pittman's Men's Clothing Store, A & P Supermarket, Taylor Electric Co., Central Cafe, Colonial Beauty Shop, Rogers Supply Co., Cherry Mattress Co., The Flower Shoppe, Teddy Jackson Painter, Mobley Insurance Agency, Alpha Cleaners, Gurkin Bros., Lilley's Laundry & Dry Cleaning, Marco Theatre, Roberson Radio & Music Co., Ann's Variety Store, E & W Grocery, Paul Auto Supply Co., G & H Building Supply Co., Pickwick Billiard Parlor, Economy Auto Supply,, Miller & Miller Auto Supply Store, Modern Beauty Shop, Williamston Plumbing & Heating Supply Co.,

Quality Grocery C., City Furniture Place, Lilley Bros. Cotton Gin, Paul's Barbecue Place, City Beauty Shop, F. B. Birmingham Builder, Eagles Store Co., J. Edward Corey & Son, Pal Motel, W. C. Purvis, McClees Cash Grocery, Baker Oil & Gas Co., Sam's Bargain Place, Wier Furniture Co., Martin Sandwich Shop, Victory Beauty Shop, Em's Beauty Shop, Modern Beauty Shop, The Outlet Store, B & W Tire Rebuilders, Pioneer Shoppe, W. J. Miller & Son, Williamston Lumber Co., Williamston Parts & Metal Co., Martin County Hatchery & Poultry Farm, Thrower Appliance Co., Miss Bernice Ward & Mrs. Clyde Ward Florist Shop, Wheeler Manning Insurance Agency., Manning's Laundry, Cobb's Soda Shop, Williasmton Cafe, Gurganus & Rogers, York Radio Service, Manning & Sharpe, Sunnyside Oyster Bar, Ayers Electrical Co., Ward's Florist, Community Barber Shop, Bunch's Hotel Barber Shop.

Heilig-Meyers Furniture Co., Blue Star Cleaners, Bullock's Men's and Boys' Wear, Courtney Gas Co., Williamston Bottled Gas Co., Leder Bros. Department Store, Carver Theatre, Viccar

Theatre, Hamilton Theatre, Williamston Oil Co., Firestone Home & Auto Supply, Worrell Appliance Co., Corey Plumbing Co. (later Corey's), The Switch (later Roberson's Cafe), Quinn Motorcycle Shop, Critcher Shoe Co., Royal Photographic Center, Wear-Right Shop (later House of Fashion, Mrs. W. H. Carstarphen and Mrs. Rita Everett), Muse Jewelry Co., Colonial Stores, Ranch Motel, Maytag Appliance Co., White's Heating & Sheet Metal Works, Williamston Office Supply Co., Lindsley Sports Center, Wier's Coffee Shop (later Wier's Restaurant), Heath Awning Co., R. C. Malone, McLawhorn Furniture Co., Roanoke Real Estate & Auction Co., Martin County Plumbing & Heating Co., Williamston Tractor & Implement Co., Community Barber Shop, Martin's Baker, Geo. M. peel Store & Market, Ward's Superette, Welch Auto Supply, Elaine's Beauty Salon, Colonial Oil Co., J. D. McCotter, Hopkins' Shoe Store, S & V Supermarket, Twilite Theatre.

Lindsley's Feed & Seed Store, Teen-Age & Misses' Shop, McLawhorn's Lullaby House, Lindsley Implement Co., Southern Butane Corp., Martin Television Sales & Service, Manning & Peel Hardware, McClees Florist, Reddick Equipment Co., Williamston Furniture Co., S & S Market, Town & Country Restaurant, Home Laundry & Dry Cleaners, Citizens Barber Shop, G & C Soda Shop, Peele Insurance Agency, Collins Department Store, Rogerson Electric Co., W. L. Howell, Farm Life Beauty Shop, Faye & Ray's Toyland, David Moore's Grocery, Askew's Credit Clothiers, Griffin's Quick Lunch, J. E. Heath, Jeweler, Ben's Grocery, G & C Restaurant (later R & C Restaurant), Roberson Bros. Tire & Battery Service, Martin Tractor & Truck Co., McLawhorn's Remnant Shop, Del-Mar Beauty Salon, Stelen's Ladies' Wear, Thompson's Laundromat, Garris Equipment Co., Griffin & Dowdy (later Dowdy's Shop), Mizell's Red & White Grocery Store, Clayton's Firestone Store, D. G. Manning Contracting Firm, Harrison Gas Co., Carson's Chain Saw Co.,

Sears, Roebuck & Co., Coastal Wholesale Building Supply Co., Breezewood Motel and Restaurant, Automotive & Tractor Parts, Inc., Harrison & Crawford Co., Lil-Ann Beauty Shop, Bailey Knox-TV Service, West End Barber Shop, Baldwin's Women's Wear, John H. Gurganus Insurance, Bagley Equipment Co., F. W. Sparrow Real Estate, Pacemaker Clothing Store, Jones Hardware Co., Virgie's Fabric & Hat Shop, Marco Hi-Fi Co., Redwood Motel and Restaurant, Bertie-Martin Oil Co., Home Modernization Co., W. Worth Mobley Real Estate, James O. Perry, Jr., Roanoke Building Supply Co., M. L. Peel, Jr. (Peel Peanut Co.), Mae's Beauty Shop, David A. Boyd, Hardy Insurance Agency, C & R Implement Co., Greenfield Nursery, Great Southern Finance, Shamrock Motel and Restaurant.

Sherwin-Williams Paint Store, Williamston Treating Plant, Harris & Lilley Fertilizer Co., Hugh R. Lindsley Real Estate, Baker & Perry, Martin County Branch Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Co., Bullock's TV Service, Whitley Auto Supply Co., Hess' Hair Styling, Dixie Dollar Store, F & W Discount House, Town & Country Cleaners, Jim Newcomb Fyr-Fyter Products, Roanoke Peanut Co., Auto Parts, Inc., Ball of yarn, Hardee's in Williamston, Col. Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken, R. L. Stevenson's Garage, B & L Marine Center, Georgia's Quality Florist, Mark Chesson & Sons, Everett Insurance Agency, Williamston Tire Service, Inc., IGA Foodliner, Cinema Theatre, Hupko's Office Supply Co., James H. Ayers Insurance, Atlantic Credit Corporation, Holiday Inn & Restaurant, Batts Concrete Products, Inc., Cato's Women's Wear, Helen's Beauty Shoppe, Linwood G. Boyd.

Atha Homes, Inc., Nationwide Insurance (Fletcher Thomas, Sr., Fletcher Thomas, Jr.), Manning (Gurkin (Farm Life), John A. Griffin Store (Farm Life), Ralph Peele, Jr., Tom Crockett Irrigation, Inc., Cherry's Market, Eastern Insurance Agency, Smith Bros. Red & White Supermarket, Jack Roberson's Automobile Service, W & B Auto Parts Co., Tarheel Home Supply, D. Harold Gurganus Building Contractor, Williamston Motor Valet, Roberson & Griffin Car Wash, Montgomery-Ward Catalog Sales Agency, G & L Gas & Appliance Co., Tom Gurganus Plumbing Repair Work, Fabric House, Thelma's Beauty Shop, Wynne's Auto Salvage, Professional Barber Shop, Pittard & Perry, Roanoke Glass & Body Shop, Larry's Body Shop, Tom Letchworth Garage, Manning's Garage & Welding Shop, Nicholson Front-End Alignment, ITT Continental Baking Co., Merita Bread, Bypass Barber Shop, West End Barber Shop, Ann's House of Glamor, Carole's Hair Styling, Helen's Beauty Salon, Hopkins' Hairstyling, Mac's Beauty Bar, Mary's Beauty Bar, Mobley's Beauty Shop, Phil-Don Styles, Mrs. Opheus C. price Beauty Shop, Margaret Selby's Beauty Shop, Shoe's Beauty Shop, Van's Beauty Nook,

Price's Billiard Parlor, Quality Builders, Raymond Rease Building Contractor, William R. Swain Building Contractor, Professional Erectors Metal Buildings, Bailey's Equipment Co., East Coast Security Systems, J. E. Crisp Cabinet Shop, Green Acres Campground, Hartley's Carpet Cleaning Service, Wiggins Floor Store, Blands Cleaners, Pigford's Discount Center, Peaks

Construction Co., Joseph Rodgerson General Contractor, Ab-
Store, Blands Cleaners, Pigford's Discount Center, Peaks Con
Construction Co., Joseph Rodgerson General Contractor, Abbitt's Mill, Clark's Pharmacy, Rogers & Gurganus Equipment Co., Roanoke Credit Bureau, Inc., Davis Pharmacy, McKeel Appliance Service, D & L Furniture Corp., Western Auto Associate Store, Jack Gray & Son Electrical Contractors, Donnie S. Whitehurst Electrical Co., Orkin Exterminating Co., Slade's Perma-Stop Co., Williamston Motor Co., Chas H. Jenkins & Co., Williamston Farm Center, Inc., Standard Fertilizer Co., Electrolux Corp., Lou's Flower Shop, Everett's Funeral Home, Manson Mortuary, Whitfield & Whitley Funeral Home, Miller Gas Co.,

Conway's Merchandise Mart, Dixie Wholesale Distributors, Terry Bros., Murphy Whitaker Store, Williamston Glass Shop, Bessie's Quick Stop Grocery, Brown Grocery, W. L. Edwards' Store, Freddy's Superett, Mrs. D. L. Hardy Grocery, C. F. Harris Supermarket, Harris Grocery, Archie T. Roberson Store, W. A. Roberson's Grocery, Rodgers Grocery, Zip Mart of Williamston, Swain Plumbing & Heating Co., Eva James Insurance, Edwards' Jewelry & Gifts, Ella's Laundromat, Sunshine Center, Azalea Mobile Homes of N. C., Inc., Provident Mortgage Co., Southern Motel, Tin Lizzie Inn & Restaurant, Johnny's Gospel Music & Christian Book Store, Club Eldorado, N. C. Green Oil Co., Cherry Paint Service, Hopkins Recycling Paper Co., Leggett, Nicholson & Gurganus Peanut Co., Planters Peanut Office, South Seas Pet Shop, Union Camp Corp., Heath's Radiator Shop, Raymond Robertson Shop, Radio Station WIAM, B-P Realty Co., Joybell Records, Chicken Kitchen, El Ranchero, Frosty Freeze, Griffin Quick Lunch, Little Mint, Little Savoy Cafe, Bateman Roofing & Aluminum, Inc., Tilmon R. Coltrain Truck Line, J & W Sandwich Shop, Evans Saw Service, Willie A. Jones Septic Tank Installation, Hartley's Sales & Service, Pic 'N Pay Shoe Store, Bennett Steel Erection, Leggett's Sundries Shop, L. S. Manning Surveyor, Mac-Pac Pool Co., H & R Block Co., Little & Sheppard Taxi Service, Reddick, Slade & Everett's Cab Service, Ella Ormand's Place, Bruce Leggett Tile Co., Williamston Tile & Marble Co., C. T. Roberson Tire Co., Thurston Motor Lines, Inc., George Transfer & Riggins Co., Alex & Lee Upholstery Shop, Roy Bland Well Drilling Service, Hopkins' Well Drilling, Leggett Bros. Well & Pump Co., Rogers & Cumbee Welding Shop,

Listed separately, twenty-two banks and three building or savings and loan associations have entered the business field of the county during the present century. Eight of them were or are located in Williamston, plus a proposed and authorized branch unit of the Wachovia Bank & Trust Company, construction of which was begun in the summer of 1974 in Martin Plaza Shopping Center.

The eight banks which are now in operation or have been in operation in Williamston since 1900 are as follows: Bank of Martin County, Farmers & Merchants Bank, Martin County Savings & Trust Co., Peoples Bank, Branch Banking & Trust Co., Guaranty Bank & Trust Co., Wachovia Bank & Trust Co., Branch Banking & Trust Co., Washington Street Unit, and First Citizens Bank & Trust Co. Work was started in August, 1974, on Wachovia Bank & Trust Co. Martin Plaza Branch.

Other banks in the county which are, now in operation or have been in operation at some time since 1900 are: J. C. Robertson, Banker, Bank of Robersonville, Farmers Banking & Trust Co., Guaranty Bank & Trust Co., Wachovia Bank & Trust Co., Southern Bank & Trust Co., all of Robersonville; Bank of Hamilton, Wachovia Bank & Trust Co., Hamilton; Bank of Oak City, Edgecombe Bank & Trust Co., Oak City; Bank of Jamesville, Branch Banking & Trust Co., Jamesville; Parmele Banking & Trust Co., Parmele; and Planters & Merchants Bank, Everetts.

Two of the three building or savings and loan assocaitions which have been chartered since 1900 in the county are still in operation and have had a remarkable growth over the years. Martin County Building & Loan Association of Williamston was originally chartered in 1910 and reorganized in 1914, the name later being changed to Martin County Savings & Loan Association. It now has a branch office in Windsor, Bertie County. The Peoples Building & Loan Association of Robersonville was chartered in 1917, its name later being changed to Peoples Savings & Loan Association. The Mutual Building & Loan Association was organized in Williamston in 1920 and had its offices in the Peoples Bank. It operated for only a short time. According to a brief article in the Tarboro Southerner in May 1890, a building and loan association was organized in Hamilton about that time, but no other information is available about it.

CHAPTER III

CORPORATIONS

In undertaking to inventory Martin County corporations granted charters through the office of the North Carolina Secretary of State from 1890 to the present, no attempt will be made to include all of them here. Some arbitrary decisions necessarily had to be made as to which should or should not be summarized and listed. In general, the objective has been to report on commercial and industrial corporations which contributed to the business and industrial development of the county, as well as those non-profit organizations specifically designed to provide their respective communities with services necessary for the physical well-being of their citizens or protection of their property.

Only a small percentage of the corporations chartered lasted for any considerable period of time. Many were dissolved by the stockholders or suspended by the Secretary of State for failure to file the proper reports after only a few years. Still others did not materialize or perform any function because of failure to comply with charter requirements, such as selling the required amount of stock, and therefore made no contribution to the business or industrial development of their particular area. Relatively few of the non-profit civic, social, religious, or educational groups are included, since many of them did not last long enough to accomplish any of the purposes for which they were intended. However, a number of others, including rescue squads, rural fire departments, and the like, are included as non-profit organizations, since they are of material benefit to their communities. Banking corporations are not included here, but are listed together in another chapter.

There are four books in the office of the Martin County Register of Deeds, listing all the Martin County corporations chartered by the North Carolina Secretary of State from 1890 to the early part of 1974. The first charter listed was issued June 20, 1890, to the Martin County Lumber Co., of Everetts. The most recent was issued May 19, 1974, to the Martin County Bicentennial Commission, Inc., of Williamston. A brief summarization of corporations included in this list, giving name, location of office, names of principal stockholders, objectives, and other facts, follows:

The Martin County Lumber Co., Everetts, N. C., chartered June 20, 1890. Objectives: To buy, sell, mill, transport, and manufacture timber and lumber. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: L. A. Conwell, G. P. McNaughton, J. C. McNaughton, and L. Calvin Maus, all of the State of Pennsylvania. (An interesting note in connection with this operation is that the lumber used in the first famous boardwalk at Atlantic City, N. J., was supplied by this mill).

The Roanoke & Tar River Steamboat Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered May 13, 1891. Purpose: To carry and transport passengers, goods, wares, merchandise, produce, lumber, shingles, and all kinds of freight. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: David D. Simmons, Dennis Simmons, Wheeler Martin (Sr.), T. W. Tilghman.

North State Lumber Co., Parmele, N. C., chartered September 18, 1895. Objectives: To own and deal in timber and logs and options on timber; to purchase and sell, manufacture and deal in lumber of all kinds. Authorized capital $75,000. Stockholders: Oscar S. Flash, of New York, Gesbourne J. Cherry and Frederick W. Samuels of Martin County.

Dennis Simmons Lumber Co.; office, Williamston, N. C.; plant, Astoria, near Jamesville; chartered November 17, 1891. Purpose: To buy and sell timber, cut and standing; to mill, manufacture, transport lumber, and generally to conduct and carry on a lumber business in all its details. Authorized capital stock, $45,000. Stockholders: Dennis Simmons, D. D. Simmons, and T. W. Tilghman.

Boyle Manufacturing Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered October 1, 1897. Objectives: To manufacture lumber, shingles, hoops, and handles. Authorized capital, $3,000. Stockholders: J. P. Boyle, D. C. Jones, and T. B. Slade.

The Everetts Lumber Co., Everetts, N. C., chartered July 9, 1898. Objectives: To buy and sell timber and timberlands; to get, cut, buy, sell, mill, transport, and manufacture timber and lumber in all its various products. Authorized capital, $25,000. Stockholders: George R. McNaughton, Simon P. Everett, John Farley, and Lamuel B. Wynn.

Robersonville Tobacco Warehouse Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered December 2, 1899. Objectives: Buying, selling, manufacturing leaf tobacco, building and operating tobacco warehouses. Authorized capital, $10,000. Incorporators: G. D. & J. C. Roberson, R. J. Nelson, J. H. Roberson, R. H. Hargrove, A. S. Roberson, W. L. Johnson, W. M. Daniels, J. C. Andrews, R. A. Bailey, D. B. Parker, Maggie Griffin, R. B. Jenkins, and R. B. Taylor.

Martin County Tobacco Warehouse Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered October 17, 1901. Objectives: To build, maintain, and operate warehouses, prize houses, steam plants, and storehouses for the sale and manufacture of tobacco and to do all things necessary for the sale of leaf tobacco. Authorized capital, $25,000. Stockholders: Slade-Anderson & Co., N. S. peel & Co., Blount Brothers, Jos. G. Godard, Eli Gurganus, and Dennis S. Biggs.

The Williamston Telephone Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 2, 1900. Objectives: Building, buying, owning, and operating a telephone system in the counties of Martin and Beaufort, the towns of Williamston and Washington, and such other points in the state of North Carolina that may be decided upon. Capital stock subscribed by W. C. Manning, Noah T. Reddick, Thad R. Hodges, Jos. G. Godard, C. H. Hodges, S. F. Freeman, Wheeler Martin, Kader Lilley, and J. G. Staton.

Hamilton Pants Manufacturing Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered September 1, 1900. Objectives: To manufacture pants and overalls with the right and privilege to manufacture and sell, or manufacture under contract, shirts, drawers, shirtwaists, and all kinds of garments. The plant was later moved to Williamston and thence to Greensboro. The corporation was dissolved under this name on March 20, 1920.

Hamilton Milling Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered November 20, 1901. Objectives: To clean peanuts, gin cotton, grind corn and wheat, to buy and sell farm products, and do a general milling business. Authorized capital, $2,000; 13 stockholders.

Williamston Land & Development Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 25, 1901. Objectives: To buy, sell, and improve real estate, to build and rent homes, and to engage in a regular real estate business. Authorized capital, $25,000. Stockholders: J. G. Godard, A. E. Whitmore, and W. C. Manning.

Gold Point Peanut Co., Gold Point, N. C., chartered December 11, 1901. Objectives: To clean, buy, and sell peanuts. Eleven incorporators.

The Robersonville Real Estate Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered February 21, 1902. Objectives: To buy, sell, build, and improve real estate. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Incorporators: A. S. Roberson, James H. Roberson, W. E. Roberson, J. B. Rawls, and James Bullock.

Robersonville High School Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered May 3, 1902. Objectives: To increase the educational facilities by buying suitable sites, erecting buildings, and employing teachers. Incorporators: J. H. Roberson, G. A. Guilford, S. L. Ross, and J. C. Roberson. Corporation dissolved June 17, 1909.

Enterprise Printing Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered June 1, 1902. Objectives: To publish newspapers, do general printing, and to handle stationery and periodicals. Incorporators: Alfred E. Whitmore, Catherine McP. Whitmore, Jesse W. Glenn.

Williamston Ginning & Milling Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered May, 1902. Objectives: To buy, gin, and sell cotton, run a grist mill, and manufacture lumber of all kinds. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: W. J. Whitaker, J. G. Staton, and William H. Harrell.

Southern Veneer Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 6, 1904. Objectives: To manufacture veneer in all forms, buy and sell logs, and operate a sawmill. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Stockholders: N. S. Peel, Arthur S. Terry, and Clarence R. White.

Martin County Brick & Tile Co., Everetts, N. C., chartered January 15, 1907. Objectives: to manufacture and sell brick, tile, and all clay products. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Incorporators: W. H. Adkins, W. S. Barnhill, J. G. Barnhill, Fred Gardner, R. E. Bailey, J. T. Barnhill, and J. B. Barnhill.

Martin County Buggy Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered March 1, 1907. Purpose of organization: To manufacture and repair buggies, carriages, wagons, carts, and all kinds of vehicles, to do general blacksmith repair work, to buy and sell harnesses, whips, robes, coffins, and caskets, and any other business pertaining thereto. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Board of directors: S. A. Newell, J. G. Godard, T. J. Smith, Wheeler Martin, J. G. Staton, and W. C. Manning.

Virginia-Carolina Peanut Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered October 16, 1907. Purpose of the corporation: To buy, sell, clean, handle, and deal in peanuts in any way and all other farm products; also the corporation shall have full power to purchase, lease, acquire, and dispose of all kinds of property. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Subscribers: Joseph G. Godard, J. G. Staton, Eli Gurganus, John R. Mobley, W. H. Cowan.

Martin County Timber Co., Jamesville, N. C., chartered December 16, 1907. Objectives: To buy and sell timber and timberlands, cut, haul, saw, buy, and sell timber and lumber in all shapes and products. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: John T. Lynch, New York, N. Y.; Robert White, Jamesville, N. C.; and Jos. G. Godard, Williamston, N. C.

Robersonville Hosiery & Manufacturing Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered January 29, 1910. Objectives: Construction and operation of all kinds of hosiery mills, manufacture of all kinds of knit goods, cotton goods, all kinds of furniture, preparation of all kinds of canned goods; and the construction, maintenance, and operation of all kinds of gas and electric power and lighting plants, furnishing of gas or electric lights in private homes and street lights, and exercise of all power and privileges incident to gas and electric light plants. Authorized capital, $100.000. There were 65 stockholders. On June 18, 1912, this corporation was suspended and a new one came into being, known as Robersonville-Tar River Hosiery Mills, Inc. Capital stock was increased to $25,000, and both common and preferred stock were offered. Objectives were about the same as those of the original firm.

Martin County Building & Loan Association, Williamston, N. C., chartered April 23, 1910. Objectives: to enable subscribers to assist each other and all who may become associated with them in acquiring real estate. Incorporators: A. R. Dunning, S. A. Newell, W. C. Manning, Warren H. Biggs, J. G. Godard, C. H. Godwin, J. W. Watts.

Williamston Electric Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 23, 1912. Objectives: To do electric lighting, to operate and furnish electric power, and to deal in fuel and ice. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Incorporators: W. C. Manning, John W. Manning, and W. C. Manning, Jr. The corporation was dissolved August 22, 1919.

Citizens Holding Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 15, 1912. Objectives: To buy, sell, lease, and improve real estate. Authorized capital stock, $2,100. Incorporators: W. C. Manning, J. G. Godard, B. F. Godwin.

Williamston Cooperage Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 20, 1912. Objectives: To operate stave, heading, and veneer plants, buy and sell timber of all kinds, and generally engage in the lumber business. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Subscribers and number of shares of stock each: J. D.

Reid, Portsmouth, Va., 50 shares; William C. Manning, Williamston, N. C., 50 shares; Harry W. Stubbs, Williamston, N. C., 50 shares.

Everett Estate, Inc., Palmyra, N. C., chartered November 24, 1913. Objectives: To purchase, take over, or otherwise acquire, manage, operate, and develop farming and other property belonging to the estate of Justus Everett, deceased. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders, each with 50 shares, were: S. J. Everett, Greenville, N. C.; B. B. Everett, Palmyra, N. C.; J. A. Everett, Palmyra, N. C.; W. R. Everett, Palmyra, N. C.; and R. O. Everett, Durham, N. C.

Peoples Building & Loan Association, Robersonville, N. C., chartered March 12, 1914. Objectives: To enable subscribers to assist each other and all who may become associated with them in making loans to members only, and to enable them to acquire real estate, making improvements thereon, and removing encumbrances therefrom by the payment of periodical installments. Forty-two members subscribed to the original stock.

Roanoke Peanut Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 19, 1915. Objectives: To buy, sell, clean, handle, and deal in peanuts generally and also to deal in all other farm products. Incorporators: L. T. Fowden, H. H. Cowan, and J. H. Saunders.

Oak City Supply Co., Oak City, N. C., chartered January 7, 1916. Objectives: To carry on a general mercantile business, retail and wholesale, cash and credit; to lend money, giving and receiving security for credit; to buy, sell, and operate farms and other real estate, cotton gins, and sawmills, and to handle, deal in, and manufacture fertilizer. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Incorporators, 25 shares each: H. S. Everett, J. T. Daniel, T. J. Johnson, and H. H. Rawls.

Mutual Burial League, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered May 20, 1915. Objectives: To do general undertaking business and deal in coffins and caskets; and to lend and borrow money. Authorized capital stock, $5,000. Incorporators: W. V. Ormond, E. D. Ormond, and J. T. Ormond.

H. L. Rives Drug Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered September 26, 1916. Objectives: To buy and sell drugs, both retail and wholesale; and to buy and sell toilet and other articles of merchandise usually purchased from a drug store. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Incorporators: H. L. Rives, W. R. Jenkins, and C. L. Wilson. The corporation was dissolved November 24, 1919.

Eastern Telephone Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 10, 1917. Objectives: To organize and install a telephone system and to construct lines, erect poles and wires, operate switchboards, and supply and furnish general telephone service to the public. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: S. L. Ross, R. J. Nelson, and Neva S. Ross.

The Robersonville Auto Co., Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 22, 1917. Objectives: To buy, sell, and manufacture automobiles and automobile supplies and accessories, to operate a garage and machine shop, to buy, sell and manufacture buggies and wagons, and deal in building materials and other merchandise necessary in the operation of a successful business. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: E. G. Flanagan, R. C. Flanagan, W. E. Hooker, T. M. Hooker, all of Greenville, N. C., Wiley Rogerson and J. W. Bailey, Robersonville, N. C.

Robersonville Tobacco Redrying Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered February 26, 1918. Objectives: To buy and sell leaf tobacco by retail and wholesale, to redry and rehandle tobacco in all forms, and market same at will. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. There were 34 stockholders.

The Lotus Club Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 28, 1906. Objectives: To operate a literary and social club. Incorporators: Dennis S. Biggs, J. G. Godard, S. A. Newell, K. B. Crawford, J. L. Hassell, J. B. H. Knight, F. F. Fagan, S. J. Everett, and W. C. Manning. There was no capital stock. The charter was suspended May 1, 1939.

Oak City Livestock Co., Oak City, N. C., chartered March 30, 1918. Objectives: To engage and carry on a general livestock business; buy, sell, and exchange horses and mules and other livestock; operate a general livery business; and perform other activities generally associated with such a business. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: B. M. Worsley, Oak City Supply Co., R. W. House & Brother, J. C. Ross, and L. J. Davenport.

Roanoke Tobacco Warehouse Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 29, 1918. Objectives: To operate warehouses for the purpose of buying ans selling leaf tobacco, and to handle leaf tobacco in any manner, shape, or form whatsoever. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: J. G. Staton, W. C. Manning, J. O. Manning, B. F. Godwin, J. H. Purvis, and Dunning & Moore.

Brick Warehouse Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered in spring of 1918. Objectives: To carry on the trade of a tobacco warehouse business, and to purchase or otherwise acquire lands and buildings for the purpose of buying and selling leaf tobacco. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Incorporators: W. A. James, Eli Gurganus, J. D. Leggett, W. T. Ward, B. A. Critcher, and H. M. Burras.

The Salsbury-Johnson Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered December 28, 1918. Objectives: To do general mercantile and farm supply business, and buy and sell at wholesale and retail merchandise of every nature, kind, and description. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: P. L. Salsbury, R. L. Salsbury, H. S. Johnson, and L. R. Everett.

Martin County Fair Association, Williamston, N. C., chartered December 18, 1919. Objectives: To own and operate a stock and agricultural fair; to construct and equip necessary buildings for same; to deal in livestock of all kinds; to do all things nercessary for carrying on a stock and agricultural fair; and to construct, own and operate a race track, baseball field and other forms of athletics, including all forms and varieties of amusements. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: J. H. Purvis, J. L. Hassell, Clayton Moore, A. R. Dunning, and C. H. Godwin.

Union Storage Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered September 19, 1916. Objectives: To own and operate a storage warehouse for all farm products and do other things necessary in a general warehouse business. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: J. G. Staton, Bank of Martin County, Farmers & Merchants Bank, J. L. Hassell Co., Anderson, Crawford & Co., John D. Ward, R. G. Harrison, Wheeler Martin, F. U. Barnes, A. J. Manning, and K. B. Crawford.

Mutual Building & Loan Association, Williamston, N. C., chartered February 20, 1920. Objectives: To enable subscribers to assist each other and all who may become associated with them in making loans to members only, to acquire real estate, making improvements thereon, and removing encumbrances therefrom by making periodical payments. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: F. W. Graves, Arthur Barber, L. T. Fowden, J. G. Staton, C. H. Godwin, A. R. Dunning, Clayton Moore, J. L. Hassell, and J. H. Saunders.

Robersonville Tobacco Redrying Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered April 17, 1920. Objectives: To buy and sell leaf tobacco wholesale and retail, to redry and rehandle tobacco in all forms and manner and market at will, and to engage in the leaf tobacco business generally. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Adkins & Bailey, R. E. Grimes, J. H. Roberson & Co., R. L. Smith & Co., Eli Rodgers, Mizell & Norman, J. T. Grimes, G. A. Peel, W. J. Little, C. A. Roberson, and S. T. Everett.

The Light & Mills Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered January 5, 1922. Objectives: To construct, operate, and maintain an electric light plant, to furnish electric or other kinds of lights for streets, private homes, public places, buildings, and business houses of all kinds in the town of Robersonville and elsewhere in Pitt and Martin counties. Authorized capital stock, $45,000. Stockholders: W. E. Roberson, B. F. Coburn, and W. W. Taylor.

Robersonville Agricultural Credit Corporation, Robersonville, N. C., chartered February 25, 1926. Objectives: To make loans and advances to farmers to enable them to cultivate, raise, and house crops, taking therefore crop liens and chattel mortgages; to have power to negotiate loans through the Federal Intermediate Credit Banks. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: J. H. Roberson, Jr., H. C. Norman, R. L. Smith, and D. R. Everett.

W. M. Scales Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered March 25, 1926. Objectives: To manufacture, redry, and handle leaf tobacco; to buy, sell, broker, export, import, and deal in tobacco in all forms, leaf or otherwise; and to operate a general tobacco business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: W. M. Scales, B. B. Sugg, Guy V. Smith, all of Greenville; R. A. Bailey, H. C. Norman, and W. J. Little, all of Robersonville.

Murray & McCabe Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered Nov. 8, 1926. Objectives: To buy, sell, manufacture, and deal in timber and lumber, operate a sawmill and planing mill, conduct logging operations and general mercantile business, and buy, sell, and deal in products of the soil. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Severn Murray, Berlin, Md.; Emory S. McCabe, Hertford, N. C.; and John M. Muir, Princess Anne, Md.

Taylor Mill & Gin Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered April 19, 1927. Objectives: To operate and maintain sawmills, cotton gins, and planing mills, to buy and sell cotton and cottonseed, to buy and sell lumber and timber of all kinds and building materials, and to manufacture and sell tobacco flues. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: W. W. Taylor, Eli Rodgers, D. R. Everett, and W. T. Bunting, all of Robersonville, N. C.

Standard Fertilizer Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 27, 1927. Objectives: To manage, purchase, sell, manufacture, and otherwise deal in fertilizer and chemicals; to manufacture, purchase, sell, and deal in all supplies, raw or other materials used in such manufacture; and to also deal in all subsidiary articles that might be found advisable, and all other commodities necessary in the operation of the business. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: George A. Whiting, C. B. Mitchell, Sr., Lewis A. Blakey, all of Baltimore, Md.; C. Godwin Crockett, Williamston, N. C.; and S. S. Toler & Son, Rocky Mount, N. C.

Robersonville Storage Corporation, Robersonville, N. C., chartered May 17, 1928. Objectives: To operate a storage warehouse for the benefit of farmers, merchants, and all people who need the service, to deal in real and personal property, borrow and lend money, construct and maintain all kinds of buildings and plants, and operate all kinds of machinery and appliances and all other tools related to the construction of buildings. Authorized capital, $10,000. Stockholders: R. L. Smith, H. C. Norman, G. H. Cox, E. G. Anderson, I. M. Little, J. R. Morris, J. H. Everett, V. L. Roberson, and S. L. Roberson.

New Brick Warehouse, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered June 20, 1928. Objectives: To operate a tobacco sales warehouse, to buy, sell, and lease tobacco warehouses, and for the purpose of operating a tobacco warehouse business. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Stockholders: Roy T. Griffin, W. B. Watts, and H. H. Morton.

The Martin County Warehouse Corporation, Williamston, N. C., chartered May 10, 1929. Objectives: To operate warehouses for the purpose of buying and selling leaf tobacco in any manner, shape, or form whatsoever. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: Seventy-nine men of the Williamston, N. C., section.

Robersonville Warehouse Corporation, Robersonville, N. C., chartered February 15, 1930. Objectives: To build, equip, maintain, and operate tobacco warehouses and storage houses, with full power and authority to purchase, lease, and dispose of all kinds of property; and to carry on all the business associated with the operation of such an undertaking. Authorized capital stock, $15,000. Stockholders: G. H. Cox, Eli Rogers, W. T. Hurst, R. L. Smith, R. J. Nelson, James H. Gray, J. B. Taylor, and B. F. Coburn.

Scales Co. & Kittrell, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered July 9, 1931. Objectives: To operate motor trucks for hire and to carry on all kinds of business, either as principals or agents, in any way connected with general motor trucking. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: W. M. Kittrell, W. M. Scales, C. D. Carraway, and R. A. Bailey.

Roanoke Mutual Exchange, Jamesville, N. C., chartered February 26, 1932. Objectives: To engage in any activity in connection with the picking, gathering, harvesting, receiving, assembling, processing, transporting, storing, financing, advertising, selling, and distributing farm commodities delivered by its members, and to acquire and/or handle and market the farm commodities of its members or others. Authorized capital stock, $995. Stockholders: P. M. Holliday, R. O. Martin, O. W. Hamilton, P. J. Modlin, B. F. Lilley, W. B. Harrington, and W. T. Overby.

Martin County Transfer Co., Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered November 16, 1932. Objectives: To operate motor trucks for hire, and to carry on, either as principals or agents, factors, brokers, or commissioners, all generally approved operations related to a general motor trucking business. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: I. B. Roebuck, A. G. Norman, and I. B. Little.

Robersonville Tobacco Board of Trade, Robersonville, N.C., chartered July 25, 1928. Objectives: To prescribe, regulate, and maintain a system of buying, selling, and trading in tobacco on auction warehouse floors in the town of Robersonville. Nonstock corporation. Incorporators: Grimes, Morris & Barnhill; Everett & Taylor; Adkins, Bailey & Little; W.M. Scales, and I.M. Little.

Williamston Tobacco Board of Trade, Williamston, N.C., chartered September 19, 1938. Objectives: To advertise and make rules and regulations governing the sale of tobacco at auction on the Williamston Tobacco Market. Non-profit corporation. Incorporators: H.L. Barnhill, J.E. King, and J.B. Taylor.

VanDyke Furniture Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 10, 1932. Objectives: To conduct a general wholesale and retail furniture store business; and to buy and sell and generally deal in all kinds of furniture, household, and office furniture and supplies, hardware, lighting fixtures, appliances, and all merchandise generally associated with a furniture business. Authorized capital stock, $1,000. Stockholders: A. T. VanDyke, I. V. Woolard, and Z. P. VanDyke.

Edgecombe-Martin County Electric Membership Corporation; principal office, Tarboro, N. C.; chartered June 13, 1936. Objectives: To promote and encourage the fullest possible use of electrical energy in rural sections . . . by making (it) available at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound and prudent management; to generate, manufacture, purchase, acquire, and accumulate electric energy for its members and to transmit, distribute, sell, and dispose of such electric energy to its customers, to acquire and lease rights of way, and to obtain all necessary equipment for the satisfactory and successful operation of the corporation; to borrow money and to sell bonds, notes, bills of exchange, debentures, and other evidences of indebtedness. Directors of the corporation: B. C. Mayo, C. W. Mayo, W. D. Moore, W. J. Moye, and R. V. Knight, all of Tarboro.

Belk-Tyler Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 20, 1937. Objectives: To conduct a general mercantile business, both wholesale and retail, including buying and selling of dry goods and notions, ready to wear, shoes, clothing, furniture, and all goods, wares, and merchandise of every kind and description not specifically mentioned herein. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: W. H. Belk, Charlotte, N. C.; A. L. Tyler, Rocky Mount, N. C.; J. H. Tyler, Kinston, N. C.; and C. A. Plyler, Williamston, N. C.

Halifax Electric Membership Corporation, chartered December 15, 1938. The territory of operation of the corporation shall be principally in the counties of Halifax and Martin; principal office of the corporation shall be in Enfield, N. C. The purpose of the corporation shall be to render service to its members and to promote and encourage the fullest possible use of electric energy in rural sections . . . at low cost consistent with sound economy and prudent management . . . (as) authorized by the Electric Membership Corporation Act of the State of North Carolina; to generate, manufacture, purchase, acquire, and accumulate electric energy for its members, to distribute, furnish, and dispose of such electric energy to its members and others . . . . Directors are: Balfour Dunn, S. R. White, Scotland Neck; E. V. Smith, B. B. Everett, Palmyra; W. E. Powell, T. B. Moss, B. A. Whitley, Paul Boseman, and S. C. Whitaker, all of Enfield.

The Williamston Peanut Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 7, 1940. Objectives: To buy, sell, clean, manufacture, and process peanuts or any other farm produce. Stockholders: Jesse Whitley, N. C. Green, and G. H. Harrison.

King Tobacco Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered July 23, 1943. Objectives: To buy and sell leaf tobacco on commission or otherwise, to operate a redrying plant, to redry and handle all kinds of tobacco in all forms, to act as brokers, and to do a general tobacco business. STockholders: J. E. King, Ellen King, and Wheeler Martin, al of Williamston.

Williamston Package Manufacturing Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered March 7, 1949. Objectives: To manufacture, process, buy, and sell at retail and wholesale fruit and vegetable baskets, packages, crates, and other veneer products and all kinds of wood or paper containers and packaging materials. Stockholders: G. H. Harrison, N. C. Green, and Jesse Whitley.

Fields Tobacco Co., Robersonville, N.C., chartered April 22, 1944. Objectives: To buy, sell, exchange, import, or otherwise deal in, order, reorder, dry, and redry and in any manner dispose of or sell, on commission or otherwise, leaf tobacco or the products manufactured or processed from leaf tobacco. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: R. A. Fields, Jr., Robersonville, P. K. Gravely and L. L. Gravely, both of Rocky Mount.

Colonial Frozen Foods of Williamston, Williamston, N. C., chartered October 25, 1945. Objectives: To construct and operate a freezer locker plant and to engage in the business of freezing, curing, and processing meats, vegetables, fruits, and all other types of food products. Authorized capital stock, $32,500. Stockholders: John W. Gurkin, Ben D. Courtney, and William H. Everett, all of Williamston.

Roanoke Chevrolet Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 26, 1933. Objectives: To engage in the sale of automobiles, both wholesale and retail, to operate a garage and general repair shop, and to buy and sell automobile parts and accessories and all kinds of electrical equipment. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: S. C. Griffin, J. H. Edwards, and J. Eason Lilley.

Barnhill Supply Co., Everetts, N. C., chartered March 1, 1934. Objectives: To engage in a general merchandise business, both wholesale and retail, to engage in farming and agriculture in all its branches, and to deal in all forms of farm products. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: H. L. Barnhill, A. P. Barnhill, and J. G. Barnhill.

Farmers Supply Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 25, 1934. Objectives: To do a general mercantile business, both wholesale and retail, and buy and sell goods, wares, fertilizers, country produce of all kinds, and farm crops of all kinds. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: E. G. Anderson, Robersonville, N. C.; J. H. LeRoy, Jr., Elizabeth City, N. C.; and W. F. Powers, Norfolk, Va.

Oak City Gin Co., Oak City, N. C., chartered January 1, 1935. Objectives: To do general cotton-ginning business and engage in buying and selling cotton and seed, to do general sawmill business, to buy and sell timber, converting same to lumber, to buy and sell building materials, and to buy and sell feeds. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: J. C. Ross, T. C. Allsbrook, and W. V. Daniel.

Hamilton Supply Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered February 11, 1935. Objectives: To buy, sell, and deal in commercial fertilizer materials, mules, horses, implements and goods, wares, and merchandise of every description, to buy and sell cotton and all other farm products. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: R. W. Salsbury, Hamilton;, N. C..; P. L. Salsbury, Scotland Neck, N. C.; and J. W. Eubanks, Hassell, N. C.

The Martin Supply Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 3, 1940. Objectives: To do a general mercantile business, both wholesale and retail, buy and sell goods, wares, fertilizers, country produce, and merchandise of every description, and make advances to those engaged in agricultural endeavors. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Stockholders: E. M. Trahey, W. W. Tice, and Wheeler Martin.

Eastern Bond & Mortgage Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 2, 1940. Objectives: To engage in the investment securities business, with privilege to operate a general supply business, bottling business, oil business, insurance business, also hotels, restaurants, and night clubs, sawmill, storage warehouse, and tobacco warehouses. Stockholders: C. H. Godwin, M. P. Godwin, and Julius S. Peel.

Dixie Motor Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 11, 1939. Objectives: To engage in the sale of automobiles, both wholesale and retail, operate a garage and general repair shop, and buy and sell automobile parts and accessories, and all kinds of electrical equipment. Authorized capital stock, $20,000. Officers of the corporation: S. C. Griffin, Asa J. Manning, and Irving Griffin; W. H. Everett, agent.

Woolard Furniture Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered Jan. 10, 1939 (successors to VanDyke Furniture Co.). Authorized capital stock, $50,000. New stockholders: Inez V. Woolard, G. G. Woolard, and H. G. Horton.

Williamston Hardware Co., Williamston, N. C. chartered October 14, 1935. Objectives: To do general hardware, farm supply, heavy grocery, implement, and general merchandise business, both wholesale and retail; and to buy, sell, and barter all merchandise familiar to a general line of hardware. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: W. F. Whedbee, W. G. Summers, and C. P. Whedbee.

Ayers Electric Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 3, 1948. Objectives: To engage in buying and selling, repairing and installing all kinds of electrical and plumbing equipment; and to engage in contracting for various electrical and plumbing jobs. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: J. S. Ayers, Lucy C. Ayers, and B. A Critcher.

Corey Plumbing Co., Inc., of Williamston, N. C., chartered April 28, 1948. Objectives: To engage in the general business of plumbing and heating and do all the other things incidental to the operation of the modern type of plumbing and heating business. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: George W. Corey, John Gray Corey, and Anne Johns Corey.

Robersonville Merchants Association, Robersonville, N.C., chartered August 27, 1948. Objectives: To effect a close union of merchants of Robersonville for the purpose of cooperation in all matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of said Robersonville as a trading center. No authorized capital stock. Officers: I.L. Smith, O.E. Roberson, H.G. Norman, J.H. Gray, Jr., and Phillip Keel.

Courtney Gas Co., Williamston, N.C., chartered March 18, 1949. Objectives: To acquire, stock, handle, and store liquefied petroleum or propane gas and any and all other commercial gases. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Stockholders, Ben D. Courtney, B.S. Courtney, and Billy H. Courtney.

Charles H. Jenkins & Co., of Williamston, Inc., Williamston, N.C., chartered January 31, 1946. Objectives: To buy, sell, and deal in the transportation and manufacture of automobiles, trucks, tractors, trailers, farm equipment, household appliances, and all parts and accessories thereof, and to carry on any trade or business incidental thereto or connected therewith; to buy, sell, import, or export automobile vehicles; and to carry on any and all activities connected with the operation of a garage that deals in any way with automobiles. Authorized capital stock, $80,000. Stockholders: C.H. Jenkins, Wayland Jenkins, C.L. McCoy, all of

Aulander, N.C.; J.B. Peele and E.R. Saunders, both of Williamston, N.C.

The Mutual Tobacco Barn Fire Insurance Corporation, Robersonville, N.C., chartered August 11, 1947. Objectives: To transact, on a purely mutual plan, the business of insuring against loss or damage to property by fire, lightning, or tornadoes, with all the powers, privileges and practices incident to such corporation under the laws of the state of North Carolina. No authorized capital stock. Board of directors to be made up of 25 citizens of Robersonville and Martin County.

The Martin County Veterans Housing Corporation, Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 29, 1947. Objectives: To provide homes for veterans and families of veterans and service men, and such other property to veterans and service men as their families may be entitled by law to have priority for; to secure financing through the Public Housing Administration of the U. S. Government. No authorized capital stock. Directors: Paul D. Roberson, J. P. Keel, J. R. Windslow, Jr., D. M. Hardison, and S. E. Alligood.

Harris Motor Co. (later Better Chevrolet Co.), Robersonville, N. C., chartered January 1, 1926. Objectives: To engage in the sale of autombiles, both wholesale and retail, to operate a garage and general repair shop; and to buy and sell automobiles, parts, and accessories. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: D. R. Everett, I. M. Little, and L. F. Harris. By resolution of the directors of the Harris Motor Co., on January 28, 1928, the name of the corporation was changed to Better Chevrolet Co. Stockholders as shown on the new charter: R. A. Bailey, I. M. Little, Hugh Roberson, A. H. Joyner, and W. L. House.

The Roberson Packing Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 18, 1949. Objectives: To operate a meat packing company as it relates to meat products; to buy, sell, and process meats of all kinds; to buy, sell, and slaughter animals of all kinds; and to raise stock and operate farms for all purposes. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: D. M. Roberson, Ethel G. Roberson, and John B. Roberson. Corporation suspended December 30, 1949.

Martin County Yam Growers Association, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 7, 1949. Objectives: To buy, sell, process, and ship sweet potatoes. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: J. R. Winslow, Mayo Hardison, and Meyer M. Levin.

McArthur's Exchange, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered October 28, 1949. Objectives: To buy and sell feed, fertilizer, seed, farm implements and machinery, farm products, supplies, and all other forms of merchandise. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Mildred L. McArthur, W. W. Andrews, and Hersey Dilday.

Smith-Johnson Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered January 5, 1950. Objectives: To engage in the business of general merchandise, farm supplies, groceries, dry goods and notions, feed, fertilizers, and electrical appliances. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: I. L. Smith, J. G. Smith, Margaret B. Smith, and Carey B. Johnson.

Martin General Hospital, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered June 15, 1950. Objectives: To operate and maintain an institution for the treatment of sick people under the supervision and direction of skilled physicians and nurses and surgeons, providing, so far as practicable, such treatment without cost or expense to those financially unable to pay for hospitalization. A non-profit organization. Incorporators: Elbert S. Peel, George C. Griffin, James H. Gray, Sr., L. G. Taylor, Herbert Whitley, and Charles H. Manning.

Roanoke Lockers, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 28, 1951. Objectives: To engage in the business of constructing and operating freezer locker plants and to engage in the business of freezing, curing, and processing meats, vegetables, fruits, and all other types of food products. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Stockholders: Henry M. Tyler, Earl McD. Westbrook, A. C. Wullenwaber, all of Dunn, N. C.

Taylor Dairy, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 21, 1952. Objectives: To engage in the general business of purchasing, and selling at retail or wholesale, milk, cream, and all other dairy products of every sort or kind. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Helen Taylor Harris, Charles I. Harris, and Dorothy B. Taylor.

Martin Manufacturing Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered April 19, 1952. Objectives: To engage in the business of general merchandise, farm supplies, feed, groceries, fertilizer, dry goods and notions, electrical appliances, building supplies, and all products incidental to a general business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Paul D. Roberson, Druscilla E. Roberson, and G. G. Edmondson.

Williamston Storage Corporation, Williamston, N. C., chartered April 18, 1952. Objectives: To do general storage business, such as tobacco and other commodities, and to do a general for-hire trucking business. Authorized capital stock, $150,000. Stockholders: T. W. Skinner, R. J. Hardison, and D. L. Simmons.

Jamesville Volunteer Fire Department, Jamesville, N. C., chartered August 26, 1953. Objective: To provide protection from fire for the town of Jamesville and community. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Arthur Wallace Lilley, P. C. Blount, Jr., C. T. Gaines, J. T. Coltrain and A. R. Roberson.

Williamston Industrial Development Corporation, Williamston, N. C., chartered October 13, 1953. Objectives: To seek and encourage industrial and all other typs of development to locate in and around the town of Williamston, and to encourage and assist industrial and all types of development presently located in and around Williamston. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: J. H. Edwards, H. L. Barnhill, Wheeler M. Manning, C. U. Rogers, Geo. W. Corey, R. E. Peele, D. R. Davis, B. D. Courtney, W. M. Baker, A. J. Manning, and J. E. Griffin.

Johnson Mercantile Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered November 30, 1953. Objectives: To engage in and operate a general mercantile business, to buy and sell all kinds of goods, and to perform all things reasonably necessary to the operation of a general mercantile business. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: H. S. Johnson, Jr., Irma Faye Johnson, and Michael H. Johnson.

Martin Tractor & Truck Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered October 14, 1953. Objectives: To engage in, conduct, and operate a tractor, truck, and farm implement business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Laurence E. Lilley, H. C. Miller, and W. O. Peele, Jr.

Williamston Furniture Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 17, 1953. Objectives: To conduct and carry on a retail and wholesale furniture business and perform all the necessary operations incidental to a general furniture business. Authorized capital stock, $60,000. Stockholders: C. U. Rogers, C. G. Leggett, and Johnnie Rawls.

Robersonville Tractor Co., Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered May 31, 1954. Objectives: To engage in the business of buying, selling, distributing, leasing, servicing, repairing, and otherwise dealing in agricultural implements. Authorized capital stock, $30,000. Stockholders: Floyd F. Hendrix, John T. Barnhill, both of Greenville, N. C., and Richard K. Barnhill, Robersonville, N. C.

Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department, Hamilton, N. C., chartered April 19, 1955. Objective: To provide protection from fire for the town of Hamilton and surrounding community. No capital stock. Directors: J. E. Cherry, A. O. Everett, Dewey Stalls, Don Matthews, Jr., and W. N. Everett.

Harrison Gas Corporation, Williamston, N. C., chartered January 26, 1956. Objectives: To keep and sell at wholesale and retail all kinds of natural gas and manufactured gas, liquid petroleum, gasoline, and motor oils, and perform all the operations incidental to such a business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: G. H. Harrison, Velma H. Coburn, and Jesse W. Curtis.

Griffins Township Fire Department, Rt. 1, Williamston, N. C., chartered May 25, 1956. Objective: To operate a voluntary community fire department for the benefit of all citizens in the community and the protection of property from loss by fire or windstorms. No capital stock. Directors: Andrew Griffin, Robert D. Perry and Roland Griffin.

Austin Farms, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered June 8, 1956. Objectives: To buy, sell, process, import, export, job, distribute, produce, and otherwise acquire, dispose of, and deal in—either at wholesale or retail—all kinds of poultry, eggs, and poultry products generally of every kind. Authorized capital stock, $400,000. Stockholders: R. Austin Williams of Wendell, N. C.; H. T. Highsmith, V. L. Roberson, Paul D. Roberson, and Horace Fulcher of Robersonville. On December 2, 1968, Austin Farms merged with and assumed the name of Central Soya.

Martin County Farm Bureau, Inc., of Williamston, N. C., chartered June 27, 1956. Objectives: To develop, promote, foster, and protect programs for the general welfare, including the economic, social and educational well-being, of farm people. Non-profit corporation. Incorporators: George Oglesby, R. S. Everett, S. T. Everett, Mayo Hardison, G. H. Forbes, H. U. Peel, D. V. Clayton and George C. Griffin.

Martindale Foods, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered March 15, 1957. Objectives: To operate a canning, freezing, and food processing plant for all kinds of foods and food products and to do all things necessary and incident thereto. Authorized capital stock, $500,000. Incorporators: R. C. Malone, Geo. W. Corey, and H. L. Barnhill.

Farmers Feed & Grain, Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered May 13, 1957. Objectives: To manufacture, grind, mill, blend, treat, produce, purchase, sell, import, export, and deal in and with flour, cereals, and meal, and to carry on a general milling business.

Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: H. S. Johnson, H. C. House, B. L. House, and W. C. House.

House Farming Corporation, Hamilton, N. C., chartered May 23, 1957. Objectives: To own, lease, and operate one or more farms for the purpose of raising and producing all kinds of crops and raising all kinds of livestock, to grow all kinds of trees, and to carry on all business generally associated with farming. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: W.C. House, Mary W. House, and H.C. House.

Harrison-Crawford Co., Inc., Williamston, N.C., charterd May 13, 1958. Objectives: To conduct a general insurance agency and insurance brokerage business, consisting of all forms of insurance. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Board of directors: N.K. Harrison, Asa H. Crawford, N.C. Green, and J. Paul Simpson.

Robersonville Development Corporation, Robersonville, N.C., chartered May 20, 1958. Objectives: To engage in the business of holding real estate for rent or to engage in the poultry business. Authorized capital stock, $150,000. Stockholders: Norman R. Ward, Claude R. Wilson, and James E. Gray.

Robville Manufacturing Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered June 9, 1958. Objectives: To engage in the business of manufacturing and processing cloth into clothes. Authorized capital stock, 500 shares, no par value. Board of directors: Morris Goodis, Bella Goodis, Aileen Rubenstein, all of Long Island, N. Y. Incorporators: Nora R. Ward, Paul D. Roberson, and E. B. Whichard of Robersonville, N. C.

Martin Memorial Gardens, Williamston, N. C., chartered March 19, 1959. Objective: To engage in the business of operating a perpetual-care cemetery for burial of the dead. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Directors: William W. Biggs, W. Worth Mobley, John T. Gurkin, John W. Gurkin, all of Williamston, N. C.; and John L. House, Robersonville, N. C.

Robersonville Rescue Squad, Robersonville, N. C., chartered July 11, 1959. Objectives: To save life, administer first aid, teach safety, and perform any service to minimize injury to person or damage to property in any emergency. Non-profit corporation. Directors: R. B. Lee, Wilbury Ray Matthews, Arthur Bullock, John H. Rawls, Gene W. Taylor and John L. House.

D. G. Matthews & Son, Hamilton, N. C., chartered August 26, 1959. Objectives: To engage in farming activities, to plant, sow, cultivate, and harvest all farm crops, and to plant and raise shrubbery for its own use or for sale or other disposition. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Directors: D. G. Matthews, Jr., Mary Matthews, and D. G. Matthews, Sr., Incorporators: Frank P. Meadows, Jr., Jeff D. Batts, and Frank P. Meadows, Sr., all of Rocky Mount. P. Meadows, Jr., Jeff D. Batts, and Frank P. Meadows, Sr., all of Rocky Mount.

Critcher Lumber & Veneer Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 25, 1959. Objectives: To manufacture, saw, veneer, and deal in all types of trees, lumber, and allied products. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Stockholders: T. S. Critcher, R. A. Critcher, Jr., Ellie W. Critcher, and James A. Critcher.

Baptist Home for the Aging of Hamilton, Hamilton, N. C., chartered September 25, 1959. Objectives: To solicit funds, to purchase, hold title to, and convey both real and personal properties; to build and equip a Baptist Home for the Aging in North Carolina. Incorporators: Rev. Clyde E. Baucum, Wilson, N. C.; Henry S. Johnson, Hamilton, N. C.; Forrest G. Shearin, Scotland Neck, N. C.; R. Edwin Peele, Williamston, N. C.; and Earle J. Rogers, Washington, N. C. On February 9, 1961, by action of the directors, the corporation was dissolved.

Griffin Motor Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 20, 1959. Objectives: To buy, sell, and exchange all types of automobiles and trucks, new and used, to operate a repair garage, and to perform all operations incidental to the operation of a garage. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Stockholders: W. O. Griffin, W. O. Griffin, Jr., James E. Griffin, R. T. Griffin, T. R. Griffin, and Joseph W. Griffin.

Public Oil Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered December 21, 1959. Objective: To engage in the business of dealing in petroleum products, wholesale and retail, as distributors. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: R. H. Roberson, Greenville, N. C.; D. D. Roberson and Lena P. Roberson, both of Robersonville.

North Carolina Peanut Buyers Association, Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered March 4, 1959. Objectives: To promote, stimulate, and stabilize, by research, experimentation, education, and otherwise, the purchase of peanuts by responsible and experienced commission or independent buyers, to promote and foster cooperation among its members, and to promote or oppose legislation, either national or local. A non-profit organization. Board of directors: J. W. Eubanks, Hassell, N. C.; R. Frank Everett, L. R. Everett, A. S. Johnson, Jr., Hamilton, N. C.; Frances A. Manning, and Hassell Warren, Williamston, N. C.

Williamston Rescue Squad, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 25, 1960. Objective: To operate an organization for rendering service in the nature of rescue work of all types related to the safety and betterment of the community. A non-profit corporation. Initial board of twelve directors: Dr. G. G. Himmelwright, Chas. H. Manning, William Spruill, Warren Goff, Darrell Taylor, David Rogerson, James Speller, Preston Johnson, Jack E. Jernigan, Darrell Clayton, Jack H. Edwards, and James E. Myers.

Robersonville Grain Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered September 29, 1960. Objectives: To engage in the business of dealing in grain, seed and feeds, wholesale and retail, and as distributor. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: H. E. Mobley, Edna M. Mobley, H. T. Highsmith, and Brownie R. Highsmith, all of Robersonville, N. C.

Williamston United Fund, Williamston, N. C., chartered November 15, 1960. Objective: To create a fund to be annually collected through voluntary subscriptions, as well as by gifts, bequests and other legal means, which shall be distributed for the support of health, welfare and educational agencies in Williamston and elsewhere in the United States. Non-profit corporation. Incorporators: Gilbert G. Woolard, Thomas R. Davis and Exum L. Ward.

Fort Branch Battleground Association, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered August, 1961. Objectives: To operate an organization for restoring and preserving what is commonly known and designated as the Fort Branch Civil War Battleground adjacent to Roanoke River in Martin County, whereby the said battleground will be maintained for the public benefit. A non-profit corporation. Directors: F. M. Manning, Dr. James H. McCallum, Williamston, N. C.; Rufus Coltrain, Henry B. Winslow, Oak City, RFD, N. C.; Mary Waldo House, Catherine E. Harrell, and Mary Alice Matthews, Hamilton, N. C.

Martin Memorial Library, Williamston, N. C., chartered October 30, 1961. Objective: To operate a library. Non-profit corporation. Twenty-two directors; J. H. Gurganus, agent.

The Hamilton Development Corporation, Hamilton, N. C., chartered November 21, 1961. Objectives: To buy, sell, exchange, build, and deal in real properties of all kinds and forms. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: D. G. Matthews, Sr., W. C. House, and W. A. Everett.

John W. Eubanks, Inc., Hassell, N. C., chartered December 22, 1961. Objectives: To engage in any and all kinds of agriculture, and to establish and carry on a general merchandising business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Directors: J. W. Eubanks, Ellen Eubanks, and Eleanor Flynn.

Martin County Hospital, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 13, 1962. Objectives: To establish, operate, and maintain hospitals, clinics, and other related facilties. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Geo. W. Taylor, R. C. Malone, Nat W. Johnson, David Boyd, Grady Godard, Vance L. Roberson, Oscar R. Roberson, W. C. House, L. G. Taylor, Thurman Ange, and D. G. Matthews, Sr.

Mary S. Gray Library, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 3, 1962. Objective: To operate a library. No capital stock. Directors: W. C. Bunch, W. E. Honeyblue, and W. C. Chance.

Harrison Oil Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 22, 1962. Objectives: To engage in the business of selling, distributing, and delivering petroleum products of all kinds to homes, farms, and commercial users. Authorized capital stock, $300,000. Stockholders: H. L. Barnhill, J. Thomas Barnhill, Jr., E. R. Saunders, and Bruce E. Roebuck.

C & R Implement Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 15, 1962. Objectives: To engage in and conduct and operate a tractor, farm machinery, equipment, and implement business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Reginald W. Coltrain, Lida Faye Coltrain, Thomas W. Revels, and Sylvia Perry Revels.

Harrison Propane Gas Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 3, 1963. Objectives: To distribute propane gas and other related products, and sell and service appliances of all kinds, Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: William G. Arnold, Jesse W. Curtis, and Laurence E. Lilley.

Green-Britton Motors, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 27, 1963. Objectives: To buy, sell, and repair all types of automobiles and trucks, also to deal in farm machinery. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: William M. Green, Bobby S. Britton, Elizabeth G. Green, and Sarah S. Britton.

Fargay Broadcasters, Inc., Williamston, N.C., chartered April 24, 1964. Objective: To engage in the business of radio broadcasting. Autohrized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: William H. Farrior, Jr., Christine B. Farrior, Chas. M. Gaylord, and Catherine S. Gaylord.

Wynne-Green Peanut Market, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered September 26, 1964. Objective: Distribution of peanuts, grains, farm products, seeds, and feeds. No authorized capital stock. Directors: William M. Green, L. Wilson Wynne, Elizabeth M. Green, and Mary F. Wynne.

N. C. Green Oil Company, Williamston, N. C., chartered December 9, 1964. Objectives: To deal in petroleum products of all kinds; and to deal in automobiles, parts, and accessories. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: N. C. Green, Sylvia U. Green, and Charles M. James.

Bear Grass Fire Department, Bear Grass, N. C., chartered March 22, 1965. Objectives: To acquire and own fire-fighting equipment for the mutual benefit of the citizens and for the protection of all property. Non-profit corporation. Directors: W. Dan Peele, Rufus Gurganus, Javan Rogers, J. W. Sawyer and Jesse F. Martin.

Oak City Rescue Squad, Oak City, N. C., chartered May 4, 1966. Objective: To operate an organization that will render service in the nature of rescue work. No capital stock. Directors: H. J. McCracken, J. C. Johnson, Wiley Bunting, William Butler, Minton Beach, Jr., and Rupert Turner.

Williamston Packing Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered June 9, 1967. Objectives: To purchase, acquire and take over the business and property, both real and personal, of the Williamston Packing Co., a partnership; and to buy, sell, slaughter livestock, and cure meats of all kinds. Authorized capital stock, $400,000. Stockholders: Russell L. Griffin, Carrie Dell Griffin, George M. Peel, and Lola P. Rogerson.

Robersonville Housing Authority, Robersonville, N. C., chartered July 25, 1967. Objectives: To set up a housing authority in accordance with the law relating to housing authorities; and to make applications for funds. Directors, appointed by the town commissioners, were: R. Austin Williams, R. B. Lee, Gene W. Taylor, John M. Andrews, and Robert B. Williams.

Slade-Rhodes Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered August 25, 1965. Objectives: To take over and operate the business and property of all kinds presently under the ownership of Slade, Rhodes & Co., a partnership. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Stockholders: D. G. Matthews, Sr., D. G. Matthews, Jr., and L. R. Everett.

Everett-Matthews Co., Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered August 25, 1965. Objectives: To acquire, take over, maintain and operate the business now being carried on by the Everett-Matthews

Equipment Co., a partnership. Authorized capital stock, $200,000. Stockholders: D. G. Matthews, Sr., D. G. Matthews, Jr., and R. H. Everett. On December 22, 1967, the Everett-Matthews Co., Inc., was merged with Slade-Rhodes Co.

Mark Chesson & Sons, Inc., Williamston, N.C., chartered February 8, 1966. Objectives: To buy, sell, maintain, service and repair all kinds of machinery, automobiles, and trucks, and to do all things necessary and incidental to the operation of an equipment company. Authorized capital stock, $100.000. Stockholders: Mark Chesson, William E. Chesson, and Marcus C. Cheson.

Peel Peanut Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 15, 1966. Objectives: To buy, sell, process, and exchange shelled or unshelled peanut products and also to transport peanuts to and from the place of business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: M. L. Peel, Sr., M. L. Peel, Jr., and Nell B. Peel.

Batts Concrete Works, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 29, 1966. Objectives: To buy and exchange materials used in the mixing of concrete and concrete products. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Cecil R. Batts, Bernice B. Tayloe, and Thelma C. Batts.

Eastern Insurance Agency, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered March 15, 1967. Objectives: To engage in the business of operating an insurance agency, to carry on a general real estate business, and to acquire and sell securities. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: J. Wayne Ellis, James O. Perry, Jr., of Williamston, and S. C. Rochelle of Windsor, N. C.

Motor Inns of Carolina, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered May 15, 1967. Objectives: To provide food, lodging and other affiliated services and merchandise to the public and all things incidental to the operation of a motel. Authorized capital stock, $300,000. Stockholders: Laurence E. Lilley, John W. Lilley, Joseph Z. Revels, Chas. G. Campbell, D. G. Manning, and J. C. White.

Biggs Funeral Home, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 22, 1967. Objectives: To prepare bodies for burial and to provide the services incidental to operation of a funeral home business. Authorized capital stock, $150,000. Stockholders: William W. Biggs, Julia H. Biggs, and William M. Howell.

Robersonville Products Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered September 22, 1969. Objectives: To engage in and carry on a general manufacturing business, and to buy, sell, or otherwise deal in the manufacture of fixtures and woodwork of all kinds.

Authorized capital stock, $150,000. Stockholders: J. Norman Goddess, Florence Goddess of Evanston, Ill.; and Irene E. Nash, Chicago, Ill.

Kahn & Feldman, Inc., Jefferson Mills, Williamston, N. C., chartered May 17, 1968. Objectives: To texturize and otherwise process man-made fibers and to manufacture products made from such fibers. The parent firm is recognized as having been incorporated in the State of Virginia.

R. Frank Everett Equipment Co., Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered August 20, 1970. Objectives: To buy and exchange materials for the manufacture of farm machinery, parts, and other articles of metal fabrication, and to repair and sell farm machinery. Authorized capital, $100,000. Stockholders: R. Frank Everett and Delma Faye E. Everett.

School Services, Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered August 26, 1970. Objective: To provide transportation for school children to and from school. Non-profit organization. Directors F. A. Whitfield, Spencer Ayers, A. O. Everett, and M. H. Johnson.

Peaks Construction Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered February 11, 1969. Objectives: To make, enter into, perform, and carry out contracts for building and erecting houses of all kinds. Authorized capital stock, $50,000. Stockholders: Jodie Peaks, J. L. Peaks and Margaret Peaks.

Martin Education Academy, Inc., Everetts, N. C., chartered March 17, 1969. Objectives: To build, purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire, own, or possess buildings, playgrounds, equipment of all kinds, furniture, books, and scientific equipment suitable for the operation of a school. Non-profit corporation. Board of directors: D. R. Davis, Jr., W. W. Biggs, L. E. Lilley, J. H. McCallum, and Rudolph E. Saunders. This corporation never functioned, and the charter was permitted to lapse.

Oak City Patrons, Inc., Oak City, N. C., chartered September 2, 1970. Objective: To operate one or more vehicles for the transportation of students from points and places in Martin County to points and places in Halifax County. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Otis W. Casper, Edward Brown, Jr., Lester Harrell, Jr., Paul Woodworth, Francis Keel, and K. S. Bunting.

Williamston Housing Authority, Williamston, N. C., chartered August 10, 1967. Objective: To act as an authority under the Housing Authorities Law, Chapter 157, G. S., N. C. Non-profit corporation. Commissioners appointed by governing authorities of the Town of Williamston: Bruce Roebuck, chairman; C. U. Rogers, Willard C. Moses, David R. Davis, Jr., and Clay M. Kirkman.

R. Frank Everett Real Estate & Construction Co., Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered March 12, 1971. Objectives: To engage in the buying and selling of real estate of all kinds, and to buy and sell all kinds of building materials used in general construction business. Authorized capital stock, 1,000 shares without par value. Directors: R. Frank Everett, Faye E. Everett, and Susan E. Hawkins.

Carolina Peanuts of Robersonville, Robersonville, N. C., chartered April 30, 1971. Objective: To engage in the business of dealing with peanuts and peanut products. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: William M. Green, Elizabeth G. Green, and Essie G. Green.

Tom Crockett Irrigation, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered May 4, 1970. Objectives: To purchase, manufacture, and sell at wholesale and retail irrigation equipment of all kinds. Authorized capital stock, $10,000. Stockholders: Tom Crockett, Julia W. Crockett, and Sally D. Crockett.

Coastal Leasing & Rental, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 10, 1970. Objective: To engage in the business of renting or leasing trucks, tractors, and various items of equipment. Authorized capital stock, 100 shares, no par value. Directors: Laurence E. Lilley, Mary Anna Lilley, and William R. Peel.

Alpha Cleaners, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 31, 1970. Objectives: To engage in and conduct a general laundry and dry cleaning business. Authorized capital stock, 100 shares, no par value. Stockholders: John Nicholls, Jr., Washington, N. C.; Marvin Sutton, Greenville, N. C.; and William R. Peel, Williamston, N. C.

Mast-Clark's Pharmacy, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered September 30, 1970. Objectives: To manage, operate, and carry on all business generally related to the operation of a drug store. Directors: William H. Mast, Charles M. Bennett, C. E. Page, Jr., and John Clegg Herring, all of Henderson, N. C.

East Coast Security Systems, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered October 19, 1970. Objectives: To buy, sell, install, and service security systems of all kinds, including fire and burglar alarms. Authorized capital stock, $25,000. Stockholders: Hugh B. Griffin, Edna W. Griffin, Melvin D. Williams, and Dorothy H. Williams.

Shamrock Motel & Restaurant, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 27, 1971. Objectives: To own and operate motels and restaurants. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: Robert E. Taylor and Bonita H. Taylor.

Martin County Educational Corporation, office, Robersonville, N. C.; chartered May 18, 1971. Objective: To provide superior education, instruction, and training through the establishment of a non-sectarian private school. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Aubrey E. Harrell, Johnny Hyman Ross, Bobby G. Mobley, William M. Green, Joanne Walker, Peggy Gardner, and Russell Mann.

Martin Academy, Inc., Everetts, N. C., chartered June 4, 1971. Objective: Same as for the Martin County Educational Corporation, Inc. Non-profit corporation. Directors: William S. Johnson, Harry T. McDonald, Jr., both of Robersonville, N. C.; and Clifton Hollis, Williamston, N. C.

Dr. Victor W. T. Ng, M.D., P.A., Robersonville, N. C., chartered May 3, 1971. Objective: To engage in every aspect of the practice of medicine. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Directors: Dr. Victor W. T. Ng, Alice W. Ng, and Paula W. Wong.

Hamilton Realty & Construction Co., Hamilton, N. C., chartered June 21, 1971. Objectives: To buy, sell, exchange, develop, and generally deal in real properties, and conduct and carry out the obligations and business incidental to a realty operation. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: D. G. Matthews, Jr., R. Frank Everett, and W. Norman Everett.

Hamilton IGA, Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered June 7, 1971. Objectives: To buy, sell, and deal directly or indirectly at wholesale or retail in all groceries generally associated with a grocery store. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: L. R. Everett, R. H. Everett, and Robert E. Etheridge.

B-P Realty, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 23, 1971. Objectives: To engage in the business of operating an insurance agency to sell insurance of all kinds, to carry on a general real estate business, and to maintain a general real estate agency. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: James O. Perry and Hugh R. Baker.

Williamston Farm Center, Williamston, N. C., chartered July 8, 1971. Objectives: To engage in the business of manufacturing and selling, wholesale and retail, farm equipment, supplies, feeds, and fertilizers. Authorized capital stock, 100 shares, no par value. Directors: John W. Lilley, Nancy R. Lilley, William J. Matkins, and Velma T. Matkins.

Robersonville Transportation Co., Robersonville, N. C., chartered September 8, 1971. Objectives: To own and operate a bus or buses or other motor vehicles for the purpose of transporting members of clubs to any form of recreational, religious, or civic endeavor, without charge. Incorporators: Jackson Sharp, D. W. Alexander, Robt. B. Wilson, Hilton L. Carson, Victor Ng. Henry C. Norman, and J. R. Crandell.

Kellog Research, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 4, 1971. Objectives: To investigate, research, assimilate, and develop historical documents and facts, and to buy, sell, publish, and exchange all matters related thereto. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: Mrs. Blanche Ferris, Van West, Ohio; Mrs. M. C. Harris, Nice, Calif.; Miss Elenaor Mann, Upper Lake, Calif.; Rev. John Still, Williamston, N. C.; and Mrs. Helen H. Kincaid, Williamston, N. C.

Robersonville Area Centennial, Inc., Robersonville, N. C., chartered November 9, 1971. Objective: To stage a 100th Anniversary Celebration for the town and area of Robersonville. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Ralph G. Mobley, D. M. Hardison, and J. R. Crandell. Incorporators: E. B. Whichard, W. A. Cherry, and Claude R. Wilson.

Standard Fertilizer Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered October 30, 1972. Objectives: To own, manage, conduct, operate, buy, sell, and otherwise deal in fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, pesticides, and all other farm chemicals. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: H. A. Bowen, C. U. Rogers, Javan H. Rogers, D. G. Matthews, Jr., J. C. Whitehurst, and J. Hilton Forbes.

Baker Gas Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 30, 1972. Objectives: To deal in propane liquefied gas products, both wholesale and retail, and to deal in household appliances. Authorized capital stock, $250,000. Stockholders: W. Marvin Baker, Ruth Allen Baker, and James W. Thrower.

Baker Oil Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered November 30, 1972. Objectives: To deal in petroleum products, both wholesale and retail, and to deal in automobile accessories. Authorized capital stock, $250,000. Stockholders: W. Marvin Baker, Ruth Allen Baker, and Howard C. Bowen.

Eastern Farm Products, Inc., Oak City, N. C., chartered December 7, 1971. Objectives: To manufacture and blend farming fertilizers for wholesale sales and distribution, and also retail sales and distribution of blended fertilizers and other supplies.

Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Stockholders: Wiliam M. Bell, Windsor, N. C.; J. Beverly Congleton, Stokes, N. C.; Henry S. Johnson, Jr., Hamilton, N. C.; Ashton Phillips, Charleston, S. C.; Francis B. Worsley, and Larry H. Worsley, Oak City, N. C.

Martin Technical Institute Foundation, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered April 28, 1972. Objectives: To receive gifts, bequests or otherwise, and maintain a fund or funds of real or personal property. Non-profit corporation. Incorporators: A. B. Ayers, E. M. Hunt, and W. L. Howell.

Walter E. Ward, M.D., P.A., Robersonville, N. C., chartered January 19, 1973. Objective: To engage in every aspect of the practice of medicine and the professional services involved in such practice. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporator: Walter E. Ward, M.D.

Everett Farms, Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered January 17, 1973. Objectives: To acquire farm properties and other real estate by purchase, lease, and otherwise; and to conduct the business of general farming. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Directors: Larry W. Chesson, James A. Everett, and W. Harrell Everett, Jr., Goldsboro, N. C.

Griffins' Farmers Supply Co., Inc., Williamston, N. C., chartered March 1, 1973. Objectives: To carry on and transact a general mercantile business. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Directors: William H. Griffin, James E. Griffin, Noah E. Hardison, Jr., and W. O. Griffin, Jr.

B-P Realty & Auction Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered August 28, 1973. Objectives: To engage in the business of operating an insurance agency, to sell insurance of all kinds, to carry on a general real estate business, and to maintain a general real estate agency. Authorized capital stock, $100,000. Incorporators: James O. Perry, Hugh R. Baker, and W. Evan Griffin.

Williamston Motor Co., Williamston, N. C., chartered December 12, 1973. Objectives: To buy and sell automobiles, tractors, and farm equipment and to operate a repair shop; and to engage in other business which may be adapted directly or indirectly to the principal business. Authorized capital stock, $500,000. Incorporators: N. Cortez Green, Sylvia Upton Green, Williamston, N. C.; and Sylvia Green Smith, Martinsville, Va.

North Carolina Campground Owners Association, Inc.; registered agent, R. C. Malone, Williamston, N. C.; chartered February 24, 1974. Objectives: To promote, foster, and encourage good camping in North Carolina; to assist and aid member campground owners in the exchange of information; and to advertise and promote private campground facilities in North Carolina. Non-profit corporation.

Historic Darden Hotel, Inc., Hamilton, N. C., chartered April 30, 1974. Objective: To raise funds for the purpose of restoring the building and grounds to their original condition so far as is possible and practicable. Non-profit corporation. Incorporators: W. Norman Everett, Margaret Everett, D. G. Matthews, Jr., Paul Roberson, Mrs. Catherine Harrell, Mrs. C. U. Rogers, Mrs. F. E. Wynne, Clayton House, E. S. Peel, Jr., and Mrs. R. H. Goodmon.

Martin County Bicentennial Commission, Inc., of Williamston, N. C., chartered May 19, 1974. Objectives: To acquaint the people of Martin County with history, through historical displays and pageants; and to emphasize the historical, educational, industrial, social, economic, political, and religious achievements of the county. Non-profit corporation. Directors: Jack Haden, Haywood Peaks, A. B. Ayers, Jr., Robert Haislip, Jr., Wilford Griffin, Mrs. Bailey Phelps, Donnie Hardison, and Jack Holt.

CHAPTER IV

ACCOMMODATIONS

When Martin County was established more than two centuries ago there was little need for public accommodations such as hotels and restaurants. When the first Martin natives ventured into distant states, mainly Tennessee, 175 years ago, they carried their own accommodations with them, their lives being centered in tents around covered wagons. Most of the migrants never again saw relatives and friends they left behind, and ties were maintained by few letters. In rare instances someone would wander back home, bringing news of relatives who had moved far away. The early letters averaged seldom more than one each year, and some of the settlers, venturing into removed states, were never heard from again following their departures.

About a half century later, travel became more common, and the first semi-public accommodations, called "ordinaries," were established. Entering a village, a stranger would seek accommodations for himself and his horse at a private home, paying a small fee, more for his horse than for himself in most instances. There are no official records of an "ordinary" in this county; in fact, there are few instances when public travel was recorded. Bishop Francis Asbury recorded his visit to the county in 1792, stating he spent the night with "Brother John Watts." In due time, the "ordinary" was displaced by the public tavern which served as a station along the post roads.

Apparently the "ordinaries," taverns and hotels were few and far between from the beginning of the county until a few years before the Civil War. At least the records show few of the establishments existing during the period.

The first record of a publc accommodation in the county was that of the Yellowly Hotel which is believed to have served the public around 1800. Located in the 300 block on Williamston's East Main Street, it apparently served travelers using the river as a means of transportation. The first mention of taverns in the county refers to A. S. Mooring and Captain Nathan Thompson as inn keepers in 1856. The reference is found in one of the September 1856 editions of the "Democratic Banner," a newspaper published in Williamston at that time. The old Yellowly Hotel, abandoned years before, was torn down more than 60 years ago. The locations of the Mooring and Thompson taverns are not known, though, it is known that the Thompson Tavern was operating in the early 1850s. Elder C. B. Hassell entered in his diary under the date of November 14, 1853, the following item: "Captain Nathan Thompson owned a hotel in Williamston in November, 1853, when it was sold under deed of trust for $2,000. He also operated livery stables and they were sold for $825."

Apparently Thompson recovered the property, the records showing that he was operating a tavern in September 1856, either at the original or a new location in Williamston.

While there are no official records showing the first hotel in Hamilton, it is quite possible that the late Joseph Waldo ventured into the business along about 1843. He bought the property that year and it is likely he built what was later known as the Darden Hotel. Waldo sold the property in 1855 to J. H. Sebrell for $6,000. Apparently Sebrell operated a hotel in Hamilton for 12 or 15 years before he showed up in Jamesville, managing a hotel there in 1867-1868. The records show that Virginius C. Sebrell sold the property to Anngenenta A. Boyle in 1870. It was the only bought the property in 1872, and the N. C. Business Directory lists her as the proprietoress there in 1877-1878. It was the only hotel in Hamilton and one of six in the county at that time. It is said that Mary A. Boyle bargained or sold a one-half interest in the property to the Darden family, possibly in the late 1880s. The records show that T. E. Darden and his wife mortgaged their half interest in the property in 1890, the N. C. Business Directory listing Mrs. T. E. Darden as operator of the hotel, known then as Conoho House. R. A. Edmondson bought the property from Hattie E. Darden in 1913, and sold it in 1935, the building and lot now being owned by the Darden Hotel Foundation.

Visiting in Hamilton on June 7, 1904, Alfred Whitmore, Enterprise editor, and L. C. Robertson highly praised the Conoho House there.

Other old records show that a Mr. Himonds operated a boarding house in Hamilton on August 28, 1849, according to a letter written at the time by William P. Slade.

After the Yellowly Hotel and Hamilton Hotel, the first official or recognized records relating to public accommodations show that "Uncle" Billy Watts built a hotel at the corner of Main and Watts streets in Williamston about 1853. It was known as Watts' Inn, later referred to as Planters Hotel. Apparently Billy Watts operated the hotel only a few years. Lt. Colonel John C. Lamb owned the hotel in February, 1863, according to the C. B. Hassell diary. During one of Foster's raids through the county the Yankees used the lobby as a place to slaughter appropriated cattle and hogs. Lamb was in the Confederate service during the Civil War, and the hotel was apparently closed. The next mention of the hotel, referred to at the time as Planters Hotel, is found in the N. C. Year Book for 1867-1868. Joseph M. Sitterson was listed as proprietor. He continued as proprietor until about 1880 or 1881. In 1881, the N. C. State Press carried an advertisement stating that Mrs. Smithwick was proprietress of the Planters Hotel, first known as the Watts Inn before the Civil War. The advertisement was endorsed by Joe M. Sitterson. In 1890, W. C. Kirby was operating the Kirby House on or about the same spot once occupied by Planters Hotel. No other mention has been found of the Kirby House.

In June, 1883, B. A. Coffield was operating the Rhodes House in Williamston. The editor of the Tarboro Southerner said at the time: "B. A. Coffield of the Rhodes House, Williamston, is the prince of inn-keepers. His table is loaded with the best of viands. The traveling public will be pleased if they try him."

The first move toward a sizable commercial hotel in the county was in 1896 when George W. Blount and Brother built and operated the Roanoke Hotel, corner of Main and Smithwick streets, Williamston. The brothers operated a variety store on the first floor adjoining Smithwick Street. The lobby, dining room and kitchen were in the section adjoining the store. Mr. and Mrs. Blount operated the store and hotel for years, assisted by their daughters Kate (York) and Carrie Dell (Cunningham). Charlie Baker later operated the hotel. Other operators were Mr. and Mrs. Swain, a Mr. White and others. J. H. Britt, moving to Martin from Edgecombe County, operated a farm for the Ballards in Poplar Point and later assumed management of the hotel, renaming it the Britt Hotel.

The Blounts enlarged the hotel, adding a third floor, and upon George Blount's death his son-in-law, E. P. Cunningham, remodeled and enlarged the hotel to the present size of the building, now housing Sherwin-Williams store, W. C. Bunch's barbership and Ann's Shoppe.

After the hotel was remodeled the Swains operated it. Later it was operated by a fellow by the name of White. He was succeed-

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ed by Charles Brady who operated the business until it was closed in the latter part of 1954.

When operating the hotel, Charles Baker said a man was nearer like a hog when he had his feet under the dining table than at any other time.

Also in 1896 Dr. Alonza Hassell built a boarding house, on the corner of Main and Haughton streets on the spot where the Wachovia Bank now stands. The old boarding house was moved to West Church Street and is now occupied by Margaret M. Muse. The doctor's daughter, Ida, operated the Hassell House.

About 1905 two brothers, Thomas and Sampson S. Hadley, built a two-story hotel, the Atlantic, at the corner of Main and Washington streets. It was in operation a year or two later, and Claude W. Keith was the prorietor for many years. Z. Hardy Rose and wife, Allie Hadley Rose, later assumed management of the hotel, operating it until January 1, 1931, when L. C. Hutchinson took over the operation. Several years later the property was sold to N. C. Green and others, and they converted it into a store building recently occupied by Eagle's Stores. The old Atlantic closed about 1939.

The first official mention of a hotel in Robersonville was recorded in the N. C. Year Book in 1896, but the directory gives no name. The 1902 State Directory or Year Book for 1902 mentioned no hotel in Robersonville that year but it listed the Perkins and Ross houses. The Ross House was listed in 1905 along with the Griffin and Burch hotels. There was a Keel House in Robersonville in 1907.

While it was not listed in the N. C. Year Book until 1907, it is believed the "Beulah Hotel" was built shortly before or soon after the turn of the century, possibly by J. H. Robertson. Local historians, including Mrs. Lena P. Roberson, are of the opinion that the hotel was located at the corner of Main and Railroad streets. The lobby was said to have faced Main Street and the dining room on Railroad Street, with the kitchen in the rear. The proprietors, according to Mrs. Harvey Roberson, had living quarters back of the lobby. The twenty guest rooms were on the second floor, connected to the lower units by three stairways. There was an upstairs porch over the Main Street sidewalk. Apparently a Mrs. Lupton was the first proprietress and she had a daughter, Beulah. Evidently the hotel was named after the daughter. The Burches could have operated the hotel in 1905, for a Burch Hotel was listed in the N. C. Year Book that year.

BOARDING HOUSES AND HOTELS

The North Carolina Year Book for 1867 and 1868 listed three hotels and boarding houses in the county. It is quite possible, however, that some of the hotels and boarding houses in existence were not included in the year books. The establishments are listed by years, followed by the proprietor's name and location.

1867-1868: Campbell House, William B. Campbell, and Planters Hotel, Jos. M. Sitterson, Williamston; Jamesville Hotel, Sebrell, Jamesville.

Other operators of the hotel were the David Moorings, followed by Mrs. Rosa Williams. Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Everett assumed the management of the hotel in 1914, operating it until 1918. The structure was destroyed by fire in 1919. Incidentally, the railroad station was located just back of the hotel before it was located farther east.

Although listed in 1911 as a hotel, "The Gem" was a boarding house, operated by Mrs. Mary Morton Andrews. It was said "The Gem" was operating after the "Beulah Hotel" burned.

The established hotels fell upon lean years in the 1930s when the motels first started moving into the area. Today, there is not an old-line hotel in the county.

1869: Campbell House and Planters Hotel, same proprietors, in Williamston; Jamesville Hotel, H. S. Cooper, Jamesville; and Hotel, Hamilton.

1872: The same listings recorded in 1869 were in the book for 1872.

1877: By this year the number of hotels in the county had increased to six, including four in Jamesville, operated by the Jamesville and Washington Railroad Company, H. S. Cooper, G. D. Rodgerson and W. P. Moore. The other two were: Hotel, Mrs. Mary A. Boyle, Hamilton, and Planters Hotel, J. M. Sitterson, Williamston. A. A. Bateman operated the Bateman House in Jamesville in 1884. W. B. Hadley was mentioned in the Bryant Bennett papers as the operator of a boarding house in Williamston in 1884, and J. H. Johnson was listed as proprietor of Planters Hotel, Williamston, that same year. E. A. Sitterson was mentioned in the Bryant Bennett papers as the proprietor of a boarding house in Williamston in 1884.

1890: During this year J. L. Ewell, Mrs. Courtney Williams and W. C. Kirby were operating boarding houses in Williamston. S. L.

Hyman and Mrs. Jane Jarvis were operating boarding houses, and Mrs. T. E. Darden was proprietress of the Conoho Hotel in 1890 at Hamilton. Mrs. Florence J. Mizell and Mrs. Dennis Taylor managed hotels in Jamesville in 1890. The names of the hotels were not listed.

1896: A hotel in Robersonville was listed in 1896, but the names of the hotel and its propretor were not mentioned. The Roanoke Hotel, Blount and Brother, proprietors, was listed for the first time in 1896 at Williamston. Boarding houses were operated by Mrs. S. P. Everett in Everetts, Mrs. Jane Jarvis in Hamilton and Ida Hassell in Williamston in 1896. Mrs. Florence J. Kemp and Mrs. Dennis Taylor were operating hotels in Jamesville that year.

1902: In this year were listed the following: Roanoke, Williamston, and Hassell House, Williamston; Perkins House, and Ross House, Robersonville; T. E. Darden and Mrs. J. B. Cloman, Hamilton; Mizelle House, and Mrs. J. F. Kemp, Jamesville; and Powell House and Johnson House, Parmele.

1905: In this year Robersonville listed the Griffin and Burch Hotels and the Ross House. Hamilton listed T. E. Darden and Mrs. J. B. Cloman. The Kemp House was still in Jamesville. The Roanoke Hotel and Hassell House were still in Williamston that year.

1907: Believed to have been in operation in late 1905 or early 1906, the Atantic Hotel, Williamston, was first listed in the 1907 directory. The Hassell House apparently suspended operation in 1906. The Keel House was listed in Robersonville in 1907, along with the Beulah Hotel, D. G. Mooring, proprietor. The Beulah Hotel rates were $2 per day, including lodging and board.

1910: The following were listed that year: Atlantic and Roanoke hotels, Capt. T. W. and Thomas House, the latter on Railroad Street, Williamston; Taylor House, Gold Point; the Beulah and Alice Hotels, the Mooring and Benjamin Houses, Robersonville; Darden Hotel and Mrs. J. B. Cloman, Hamilton; and Harrison Hotel and Davis Boarding House, Jamesville.

1911: The following hotels and boarding houses were listed in the county for 1911: Mrs. L. W. Hyman and J. T. Daniel, Oak City; Gem Hotel, Robersonville; Mrs. Pattie James, Everetts; Harrison Hotel and Davis Boarding House, Jamesville; Atlantic and Roanoke hotels, and T. W. Thomas Boarding House, Williamston.

1913: Among the hotel and boarding house listings for 1913 were: Mrs. R. E. Peacock, Jamesville; D. A. Outterbridge, Robersonville; Atlantic and Roanoke hotels, Williamston; N. M.

Worsley, Mrs. Celia Casper and J. W. Hines, Oak City. John L. Hines, the records show, operated a boarding house in Conoho (Oak City) in April, 1901.

1915: There was little change in the listings from 1913 to 1915, but the Smithwick Boarding House, Jamesville, and F. M. Harrell, Oak City, appear on the 1915 list.

1916: The last available N. C. directory appeared in 1916, listing only a few changes in the public accommodations. However, the Pippen Hotel, Hamilton, J. T. Stokes, Parmele, and A. B. Whitfield, Gold Point, were mentioned that year.

Following the year of 1916 the hotel business was fairly stabilized in the county for a goodly number of years. C. L. Wilson built the Wilson Hotel on Railroad Street, Robersonville, in 1939. The last activity recorded at the Wilson Hotel was on September 7, 1961, when the Rotary Club met there and inducted five new members. After that time the club met in the fellowship hall of the Christian Church. It is apparent that the closing of the Wilson hotel about that time marked the end of the old-line hotels in the county.

The transition from the old-line hotel to the motels was gradual in the county, both experiencing difficulties during and even well after the depression years.

The first mention of a modern motel is found in records dating back to 1948 when Mr. and Mrs. P. O. Holloman opened the "Southerner", a 14-room unit, on Highway 17, just south of Williamston. They have operated the business since it was established, adding to and remodeling the plant from time to time.

About the same time in 1948 James Paul Lilley built a six-room unit farther south on Highway 17. The plant has been enlarged.

Barney Conway entered the motel picture along about the same time, building and operating the Ranch Motel, a short distance from the Lilley's "Pal Motel."

Jack Dixon then moved into the public accommodations picture about 1950 when he built several cabins in the Mickey's Inn area across from the Martin County Nursing Home on Highway 64 just west of Williamston. The cabins were later made into private homes.

One of the most formidable steps in public accommodations was in 1951 when W. T. Ross built the first unit of the Ross Motel, a short distance south of the Southerner on Highway 17. The motel has been enlarged and remodeled in recent years.

Barney Conway was branching out in the motel business in 1956 when he and Johnny Gurkin and John Gurkin built the Breezewood Motel, at the intersection of Highways 64 and 13-17 across from the National Guard Armory. It was later named Tin Lizzie Inn. About a year later Conway built the Redwood motel at Skewarkey. It is now known as the Shamrock.

On May 16, 1967, Motor Inns of Carolina were granted a charter and purchased a site on the old Biggs farm across from Skewarkey Church for the construction of a Holiday Inn. The incorporators were: L. E. Lilley, John Lilley, Jos. E. Revels, Chas. G. Campbell, D. G. Manning and J. C. White. The Holiday Inn opened for business on June 14, 1968.

With its six motels, Williamston is now a recognized center for ever-increasing numbers of travelers.

In later years there were several well-known boarding homes in Williamston but the dates are not definite, and possibly the available records do not list all of them. Among the more promiment boarding homes were those operated by the late Mrs. Myrtle R. Harris, on Haughton Street, Mrs. Lennie J. Manning on North Smithwick Street, Mrs. Joseph Cowen on East Main Street, and possibly others. The last of the boarding homes was operated until recently by Mary Lewis Martin in the 200 block of North Haughton Street.

RESTAURANTS

During the early years of the county the bachelors and travelers pulled up to tables in boarding houses or hotels for their meals. The first mention of a public eating place aside from "ordinaries," taverns, boarding houses and hotels is found in Charles Smallwood's "Reminiscences of Williamston." He says Baldy Riddick was among the first restaurant operators in Williamston back in the 1870's. Smallwood also noted that Riley Heath, a colored barber, operated an oyster bar in Williamston about the same time.

Nothing more has been found about restaurants in the county until 1884 when Blair and Latham operated one in Williamston, and P. Sheppard and Company and R. P. Mann had restaurants in Jamesville.

During the next 25 or 30 years, residents must have eaten at home and travelers patronized hotels and boarding houses. The first record of an eating establishment was about 1913 when an Assyrian by the name of Karen opened an ice cream parlor and short order cafe in the building now occupied by W. L. Howell, tax accountant, on West Main Street, Williamston. There were quite a few soda shops, a number of them operating in connection with drug stores, from the early 1900's until the present time. In addition to those, J. A. Leggett, Sr., and Jospeh H. Roebuck operated soda shops in the building now occupied by Western Auto. A Greek by the name of "George" operated a hot dog stand in a tent where the Johnston Furniture Store is now located. The little business was there after World War I.

In a conference on September 3, 1974, A. J. Manning, Robt. E. Manning, James C. Manning and R. Gaylord Harrison discussed the cafes and restaurants in Williamston, dating back to about 1916. The four could not date many of the operations, but apparently they did an admirable job in recalling as many as they did and some of the happenings relating to them.

A man by the name of Spano opened the Dixie Cafe about 1916 in the building now occupied by W. L. Howell, tax accountant. The business succeeded Karen's place. About the end of World War I, Spano sold the Dixie Cafe to his nephew, John Spano, who later moved to the second floor of the building now occupied by Western Auto. He operated there only a short time before selling out to Lewis and Lennie J. Manning, who had a short tenure in the business.

In January, 1924, Lilley and Peel operated a small cafe, The Texaco, on Washington Street, according to a brief article in The Enterprise at that time.

On January 18, 1924, the Selby brothers came from Norfolk and opened the Monticello Cafe in the building now occupied by Willard's Shoe Shop on Williamston's West Main Street. In November, 1924, the Selbys sold the business to Simon Lilley, Sr., and J. D. Ward, Jr. Lilley bought out Ward in February, 1925, and changed the name to Williamston Lunchroom. A week later Lilley sold the business to Kader Rogerson who operated it only a short time.

When he sold to Kader Rogerson, Lilley opened Old Mill Inn, about six miles out from Williamston on Highway 17, and tried to develop a recreational park. The project was not successful, and Lilley later moved to the farm.

In the middle twenties, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ray opened a cafe on Washington Street in the Leggett Building, later moving to the Bowen Building now occupied by Bullock's TV. The Rays sold the business to a Greek by the name of Dykslan. Coming down from Baltimore, the new owner was said to have been the victim of a conspiracy and was forced to close about 1928.

Theodore Roberson, a former downtown merchant, opened the Sunny Side Inn, operating it in conjunction with a meat market. The cafe was converted to an oyster bar and it is still in operation on Washington Street. A Roberson son, C. T., is the proprietor of the business, which is rated one of the best of its kind in this section of the state.

James Pappas opened the Williamston Cafe in the Godard Building now occupied by Howell's tax office about 1927. He operated the business until about 1933 or 1934 when Joe and Carrie Godard took over the operation, changing the name to Welcome Inn. It became an institution, getting its standing from Joe Godard who was an institution himself. The Godards operated Welcome Inn about ten years.

During the meantime, James Pappas moved across the street and opened a cafe in the Leggett Building. Pappas sold to Gus Rigas, an accommodating fellow, who operated it with the aid of his brother-in-law, Pete Levictus. When Rigas' health began to fail in the mid-1940's, Levictus left and located in Tarboro, later moving to Charlotte.

When the post office moved into its new and present home, George Sfetsos came over from Elizabeth City and opened the Central Cafe in the old post office now occupied by the Pacemaker. Sfetsos, an able and hardworking fellow, opened the all-new business about 1939 and operated it until about 1949, selling out to Pete Christopher who operated it until about 1957. Sfetsos moved to Elizabeth City where he opened the Carolina Coffee Shop.

In October of 1952, John and Maggie Wier leased a building at the intersection of Washington and Haughton streets where Joe Everett and Williford Sparrow had previously operated a cafe for a short time. The business was located where the Maytag firm now operates, and was sold to Jerry Christopher in February, 1958. The Wier Coffee Shop was an institution for about six years.

The first motel restaurant in the county was opened in 1948 when the P. O. Hollomans built the first motel units. It was operated intermittently by various proprietors, and is now being used as a gift shop by Mrs. D. C. McLawhorn, Sr. The business in the restaurant building is known as Piddler's Corner.

The second motel restaurant was opened in 1949 soon after the Ranch Motel was built on Highway 17 about three miles south of

Williamston. After operating the restaurant a short time, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Conway sold the business to Mrs. Effie G. Sparrow, who was the restaurant proprietor for some time before the operation was suspended for several years. Mrs. Sparrow reopened the restaurant in 1971 and continues to operate it.

Starting with a sizable operation in 1955, W. T. Ross and Dillon C. Cobb developed Town and Country Restaurant into one of the largest restaurants east of Rocky Mount. Acting to meet the increasing demand and growing popularity, the owners enlarged the building in 1960 and again in 1968. Cobb sold his interest to Ross in 1968, but continued to manage it. Banquets or meetings are held there almost every day, and between 2,500 and 3,000 meals are served each week. Chef Darrell Clark and his cooking helped build a solid clientel for the business. He was followed by Chef Emmett Thomas. Last year Athemus Sfetsos, son of a former Williamston cafe owner-operator, George Sfetsos, came over from Elizabeth City to help relieve Thomas.

The fourth motel restaurant was opened in 1956 at the same time the Breezewood motel was opened across from the armory. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Conway operated the restaurant as a separate business for about three months before selling the motel and restaurant to Johnny W. and John T. Gurkin. In May, 1967, the Gurkins sold the combined operation to International Properties. A short time later, International sold the properties to J. Edward Dunivan of Chesterfield, Va., and R. B. Ritcher of Goochland, Va., the latter becoming sole owner in 1968. In January, 1972, the motel and restaurant were sold to Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Schaub of Baldwin, N. Y. The name was changed from Breezewood to Tin Lizzie by the Schaubs who continue to operate both the motel and restaurant.

Next and fifth in line was the Redwood Motel Restaurant, built in 1959 and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Barney Conway in conjunction with the Redwood Motel. The name was changed to Shamrock Motel and Restaurant in 1960. The operation was sold by the Conways in 1963 to the Charles Herrings, and they sold to Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Taylor from Maryland in 1968. The present owners-operators, Mr. and Mrs. Francis C. Harvey, purchased the property from the Taylors in 1972.

The sixth and last in line of the motel restaurants was opened by a corporation when the Holiday Inn was completed across from Skewarkey Church on June 14, 1968. One of the larger restaurants in the area, it specializes in banquets and caters to a large patronage from over an extended area.

Little information can be learned about it, but Mr. and Mrs. Ben Andrews operated a cafe on East Main Street across from Coastal Wholesale for several years back about the 1940's.

About 1947 or 1948 Barney Conway constructed a small block building on the site now occupied by W. J. Miller, and operated a cafe there for a comparatively short time.

D. M. Roberson constructed a combination rooming and boarding house on McCaskey Road, mainly to serve his employees at the slaughter house about 1937. Mrs. Ethel Anderson managed the operation until soon after the war when Mrs. Effie G. Sparrow returned home and assumed the management. She operated the business commnonly known as "The Switch" until the late sixties.

After operating in the York Building now occupied by Heilig and Meyers where J. C. Leggett maintained a quick-order cafe, the R. and C. was housed in its present location on Washington Street by Carrie and Russell Griffin and Dillon Cobb in 1948 or 1949. Willie Lee has been with the business for 25 years.

Paul Jones started the restaurant now known as Griffin's Quick Lunch on Washington and Haughton streets, serving mostly barbecue. He sold the business to Willie Modlin, but the years are not definite. In 1945 Mr. and Mrs. Russell Griffin took over the operation and improved the property, soon making it into a Class A cafe. Mr. and Mrs. Griffin in 1948 sold the business to Hugh B. and J. R. P. Griffin who, after a short time, sold it to George and Evan Griffin. George Griffin purchased the business in its entirety and continues the operation. In addition to the restaurant, Mr. Griffin handles a large catering business. He is now serving approximately 5,000 customers each week.

ROBERSONVILLE CAFES

From about 1928 to about 1936, Jim Roberson operated a cafe located just behind the present Phillips 66 station.

About 1929, Mrs. Bob Grimes operated a cafe and ice cream parlor in the Hargrove Building on Main Street. The operation was of comparatively short duration.

Some 25 years ago the Harris Cafe is believed to have been operated in a building across the street from the Trio Theatre. Little can be learned about the venture.

B. K. Roberson in 1946 opened a cafe in a building located where the Wachovia Bank is now. It operated about three years.

Built by John G., Curtis and Jesse Taylor, Taylor's Grill started operating about 1951. Garland Hardison managed the business for a number of years. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lee Vanderford are the present operators.

Robersonville's newest restaurant was built by Garland Hardison on Highway 13-64 just east of the town, and operates by the name "Our Restaurant."

A cafe was operated for a number of years during the tobacco marketing season in the Jim and Charlie Gray warehouse, according to Dixie Roberson, from whom much of the information about Robersonville cafe business was obtained.

OAK CITY CAFES

According to Edmond Early, one of the town's older residents, Slade Harrell started the first cafe in Oak City, it is believed. The cafe has had several proprietors, including the late Jesse Crisp, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Barrett. Mrs. Wiley Bunting is the current operator of the business next to Edgecombe Bank.

Oak City's first and only hotel, according to Mr. Early, was built in 1918 by J. C. Ross. Among the proprietors operating the hotel, known as "Alton Hotel" until it suspended business in 1924, were a Mrs. Sawyer and Mr. and Mrs. John York. A modern dining room was maintained in connection with the hotel. The Joe Bunting and Son mercantile business now occupies the old hotel building.

HAMILTON CAFES

Based on unofficial but reliable information, it is fairly certain that Mr. and Mrs. Richard Raynor started a cafe in Hamilton about 1934. Mrs. Gertrude Thomas later assumed the management. Other operators were Mrs. Ed Hill and Mrs. Herman Farmer. Mr. and Mrs. Dan Jones were proprietors at one time, operating the business for quite a few years, until they retired. The business continues its operation, serving mostly hamburgers and similar food items, according to Mr. "Bud" Thomas.

JAMESVILLE CAFES

While public accommodations were centered around hotels and boarding houses for many years, Jamesville has gained much attention with its cafes in more recent years.

Started as a private club house some years by Oscar Davenport, Cypress Grill became a widely known cafe about fifteen years ago along the banks of the Roanoke. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Williams operated the cafe most of the time, serving their customers fresh fish caught, cooked, and served in a matter of minutes. A seasonal business, the cafe is now being operated by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Gardner. People from miles around patronize the restaurant.

According to Jamesville's mayor, Leslie W. Hardison, Clark's Cafe was opened on Highway 64 about 1942. Serving a full menu, the business continued in operation until about 1952.

Approximately five years ago, Ben Gray Lilley built River's Edge Restaurant which rates with the finest in the county. After operating the business for about a year, Mr. Lilley sold it to Bucky Overton, a restaurant operator in Rocky Mount whose barbecue is famous. While fish is the main dish, the Jamesville restaurant, located on the river bank near Cypress Grill, offers an extensive menu. It caters to special meetings, banquets and parties.

COLORED CAFES IN WILLIAMSTON

Little official information is available about colored cafes in this county. Apparently there were few or no cafes operated by colored proprietors a half century ago or more in Williamston. It is believed that semi-public boarding houses served the need prior to and after the teens. One such house, it is said, was operated by Mr. and Mrs. William Stokes.

The first known colored cafe was operated by the late Monk Bagley and Octavious Price from about 1915 to 1918. It was located in an old two-story structure on South Smithwick Street just behind the old Bank of Martin County building now referred to as Lawyers' Building. Believed to have been erected by Elder C. B. Hassell well before the Civil War on the corner of Main and Smithwick streets, the wooden structure was moved south on Smithwick to make room for the bank building. The old structure, serving many types of businesses following the death of Elder Hassell in 1880, was destroyed by fire in 1918.

About 1920, Jake Ruffin and his son, Willie, opened a cafe on Washington Street and operated it about ten years. It was located near the old theater building.

During the thirties, a cafe was being operated on Washington Street next to the railroad about where a car wash is now maintained. A water heater tank exploded in what was known as Paul's Cafe, killing Paul Rodgers.

Fanny Ruffin operated the "Do Drop Inn" on Washington Street about where June Day Manufacturing Company now operates. The cafe is believed to have operated only a few years in the late forties or early fifties.

Buck Cherry owned "Buck's Place" reportedly in the forties on Washington Street where the laundromat is now located. Sadie Ruffin succeeded Cherry and she was succeeded Cherry and she was succeeded by Silas Eason.

Started by Bruce Payton, the "Cotton Club" is thought to have operated during the forties and fifties on Washington Street. After a comparatively short time, Melvin Moran assumed the operation and he was succeeded by "Sweetie" Ruffin.

In 1941, Eddie Watts Brown started operating "The Little Savoy" on Washington Street, and he continues to manage the business, one of the larger ones of its kind in the county.

Dr. E. L. Early Jr., built and equipped a cafe at the corner of Washington and Pearl streets, in the late thirties. The business was in operation a rather short time.

Leander Brown of Washington operated "The Hitching Post" on North Sycamore Street for a short time in the 1950's.

Bobby Ormond and Eddie Watts Brown furnished most of the information about the colored cafes in Williamston, and they also mentioned a cafe being operated at one time near the depot by "Shorty" Gorham.

COLORED CAFES IN ROBERSONVILLE

The first known colored cafe in Robersonville was operated on Railroad Street by Fon Coffield. It is believed the business was started in the teens, but it is not known how long it was in operation.

Mrs. Lindabell Knight started operating "The Big Apple" about 1935, and managed it until about 1941. The cafe gained a wide reputation.

In 1958 Mary Curtis opened and operated the Roanoke Cafe across from the Texas terminal on East Main Street. She sold the cafe in 1963 and it gained much notoriety about that time. It ceased operation about 1966.

W. H. Whitfield opened a cafe in 1967 in the building occupied by George Rodgers, corner of Main Street and Roanoke Avenue. In 1969 he moved the cafe to the triangle in Morratock Park where he operated the cafe until the property was sold to the county in 1973.

Levester Lloyd's cafeteria, started in 1966, continues in operation today.

Sarah Lloyd's cafeteria was started in 1966 and continued in operation until 1972 when it was changed into a grocery store.

During the 1950's, Jack and Mary Love operated a cafe for about one year just inside the eastern town limits on Highway 13-64.

The history of colored cafes in Robersonville is based mainly on information gained from N. W. Slade.

In addition to the regular restaurants there are a goodly number of drive-ins in the county, including the Jamesville Chuck Wagon, the Chicken Kitchen, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Tastee-Freeze, Hardees', Little Mint (Robersonville and Williamston), and a proposed McDonald's and a pizza parlor.

CHAPTER V

BANKING

Experiencing good times and reverses during its early years, banking in Martin County did not level off and attain a balanced footing until some years after the great 1929 financial crash.

In the early years county financial transactions were patterned after a "barter" system when there were no banking houses in the area. The commission merchants and other forms of business played the role of the banker for some time before banking houses were opened. Old records show that Biggs Drug Store, J. G. Godard, operating a bar and grocery, and Dennis Simmons Lumber Company would cash checks or handle drafts, sending them to Pamlico Bank and Insurance Company, Tarboro, and a bank in Scotland Neck. The two banks would express the money back. When farm produce started moving to market in the fall, farmers would deliver their cotton and other crops to the local merchant, who, in turn, would ship the staple produce to a commission merchant in Norfolk. The Norfolk merchant would credit the local commission merchant's account, and, in turn, the local merchant would credit the county farmer's account. The commission merchant in Norfolk would remit the difference, but in too many instances there was nothing to remit.

In minor transactions the people resorted to the barter system in those early days before banking houses. Farmers would bring in eggs, meat, potatoes and other farm items, and exchange them for pepper and salt, a piece or two of gingham goods, a tube of snuff, tobacco and a few other items of "necessity".

Money scarcity was described the greatest ever known in Martin County and the nation in October, 1857.

The first mention of organized banking in Martin County was made by the Dennis Simmons Lumber Company. The Norfolk National Bank had an office in Williamston on December 30, 1889. A Simmons Company check is now in the old company's papers in Duke University Library. Little is known about the bank's office in Williamston.

Sensing the need for a banking institution in the county, Jos. G. Godard opened the first county bank in Williamston on the west corner of South Smithwick and Main streets, in 1900. W. Ed

Stubbs, son of Marcellus Stubbs and his first wife, was the first cashier of the Bank of Martin County. He was succeeded in the position by Chas. H. Godwin. The institution later developed into the Martin County Savings and Trust Company, and J. E. Pope was the cashier, succeeded by Jack Hunter.

Typical of the times, the banking institution succumbed to the after effects of the 1920 depression. No panic resulted, but adverse conditions existed in the financial world, and the old barter system was resorted to again, but in a limited way.

The second venture in banking was centered in Robersonville in 1903 when J. C. Robertson opened a, more or less, private financial institution, with a $10,000 capital.

The individually owned bank reported in July, 1904, deposits in the amount of $22,204.25 and assets totaling $29,734.21. The capital stock was then $3,000. The institution gained the official status of a regular state bank in 1907, Mr. Robertson continuing as its president to at least 1912. Billy Woolard, a recognized figure in Eastern Carolina financial fields, was associated with the bank, and Jos. A. Mizelle was his assistant. Later, Jodie Woolard worked in the bank with Cashier Jos. A. Mizelle. The bank built the "tall" building, corner of Railroad and Main streets, and occupied it about 1912. Durward Everett worked there with Mizelle and was later made cashier. I. Mayo Little assisted Everett in the bank a short time, followed by Sherwood L. Roberson who served as assistant cashier for several years.

Incorporators other than those listed above included R. L. Smith, R. J. Nelson, J. L. Roberson, John E. Roberson, B. H. Roberson, W. G. Barnhill, George L. Roberson, W. T. Taylor, R. E. Grimes, Leona Grimes, John D. Everett, J. W. Ferrell, W. H. Woolard, W. L. Sherrod, J. W. Sherrod, I. H. Little, C. R. Speight, S. W. Belcher, F. J. Jeffress, J. G. Godard, J. K. Barnhill, Justus Everett, D. B. Parker and N. J. Best.

Purchasing another building, the Bank of Robersonville moved into its new quarters near Grimes's Drug Store on June 1, 1926. Continuing to serve as cashier, Durward R. Everett was later joined by Barney L. Stokes who was made cashier after Mr. Everett was appointed vice president. The two retired in 1961.

The Bank of Robersonville merged with Guaranty Bank and Trust Company in 1938, and the merger with Wachovia Bank and Trust Company was effected in May of 1960. Claude R. Wilson was named assistant vice president and placed in charge of the bank in January, 1961. Andy Warren assisted in the administration of the Robersonville office of Wachovia. Claude Wilson was named vice president and continues in charge as chief executive officer in Robersonville.

After Andy Warren advanced in the banking realm, several other assistant administrators serving with Mr. Wilson, include: Stanley Peel, Hackney High, Murray Porter, Julius Budacz, and Wayne Clark who went with the bank in January, 1971, and continues in that position today. The bank is now located in a modern new building, constructed in 1971. Wachovia donated its old building to Robersonville for its town offices and library in 1972.

The Bank of Hamilton, about 1907, was the next institution to enter the county's field of finances. Ed Council and F. L. Haislip, Sr., served the bank for years. It was merged in 1938 with Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, headquartered in Greenville where Billy Woolard, a native of this county, served as president. It was incorporated into the Wachovia system in 1960.

About the same time (1905) Farmers and Merchants Bank was incorporated in Williamston mostly under the direction of the late John Dawson Biggs, Jr., who served it as president until it sold out to Branch Banking and Trust Company in the spring of 1930. Among the early cashiers were Frank Fagan and R. G. Harrison, Sr. J. D. Woolard, Sr., served the bank after he returned from World War II, with R. G. Harrison, Sr., later becoming cashier. C. D. Carstarphen, Jr., joined the bank in the twenties, later becoming cashier. In the Branch system, C. D. Carstarphen, Jr., became cashier, followed by Herman A. Bowen and later by W. Clyde Griffin, followed still later by William Long in November, 1965.

An unusual story centers around the Farmers and Merchants Bank, going back to the early thirties following the 1929 crash and before Branch moved in to take over the institution. When the bank was about to close its doors, Dr. John D. Biggs, president, called upon his mother, Mrs. Fannie S. Biggs, and asked if he may then draw his scheduled inheritance. The request was granted and he put up $40,000 to save the depositors' claims. Asked why he put up that amount of money, Dr. Biggs replied that it was worth every dollar to tell in later years that no depositer lost a penny in Farmers and Merchants Bank.

Early Banking in Martin County

A brief review of the first banks in the county includes three financial institutions.

Bank of Martin County started as a private financial institution. It was organized on January 22, 1900, and opened for business the same day, old records reveal. It had a capital stock of $5,000. About three years later, in 1903, it had become a state bank. A report released on April 9, 1903, listed Dennis Biggs as president and Jos. G. Godard, the first, was cashier. The capital stock was increased to $12,000.

The second bank in the county, also a private one, was organized on May 4, 1903, by J. C. Robertson in Robersonville. Starting business the same day, the bank was reorganized on March 20, 1906, opening for business on April 2, 1906, with a capital stock of $15,000. W. L. Sherrod was the president and J. C. Robertson served as cashier. About a year later in 1907 J. C. Robertson's bank became the Bank of Robersonville.

The third bank in Martin County was the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Williamston, organized in April, 1905. With a $15,000 capital fund, the bank started business on June 1, 1905. Dennis Biggs was president and F. F. Fagan served as cashier.

In its June 30, 1910, financial statement, Farmers and Merchants reported $165,849.37 in resources, including $126,851.58 in loans and discounts, $2,481.43 in overdrafts, $10,500.00 in banking house, furniture and fixtures, and $26,061.36 in cash and due from banks. The liabilities included $25,000.00 in capital stock, $9,176.83 in surplus and profits, $25,000.00 in bills payable and $106,717.54 in deposits. In its first five years of operation the bank had total earnings in the sum of $16,826.83.

Individual Bank Reviews

The Bank of Jamesville was incorporated by J. L. Davenport, W. H. Martin, L. W. Mizelle, Sylvester Stallings, J. Ed Smithwick, Sr., W. H. Stallings, A. F. Stallings, S. L. Wallace, A. R. Dunning, Jos. G. Godard, W. C. Manning and James Grist Staton. The charter was signed by the Secretary of State on February 6, 1911, but due to discrepancies in certain forms, the bank did not open for business until October, 1911 with a $5,000 capital. Dr. J. E. Smithwick was president, S. L. Wallace, first vice president; W. H. Martin, second vice president, and A. J. Manning, cashier.

About the same time Williamston businessmen opened the Bank of Washington County in Plymouth. Officers were: Wheeler Martin, Sr., president; John Skittlethorp, vice president; and William B. Watts, Sr., cashier.

After serving the area well for more than thirteen years, the Bank of Jamesville suspended operations on November 15, 1924, one official explaining that "too many loans were made during the good times, and there were too few deposits in the trying times following the 1920 financial crash." After struggling four years to overcome the recession following the 1920 crash, the bank suspended operations, the third in the county to surrender its charter. The late John D. Lilley, serving as cashier, was making progress in restoring the bank to a sound position, but the odds proved to be too great.

Jamesville and community were without direct banking service for slightly more than 49 years or until 1973 when Branch Banking and Trust Company made application for a branch there. The bank opened for business on November 12, 1973, and held its formal opening four days later on Friday, November 16. Mrs. Betty Lou (Hopkins) Modlin was named manager, and Rick Kearney served as operations manager for the Jamesville and Williamston branches of Brank Banking and Trust Company, headquartered in Wilson.

When Farmers and Merchants Bank was chartered in Williamston on June 1, 1905, a branch in Jamesville was included. No records have been found showing the branch ever operated. It could have functioned in connection with the large Dennis Simmons Lumber Company at Astoria, a short distance up the river from Jamesville.

Williamston Banks

Opening for business on January 22, 1900, the Bank of Martin County was making progress in July, 1904. The bank reported $65,339.02 in deposits at the time, and assets amounted to $99,567.85. The bank had a $12,000 capital stock and J. G. Godard was the cashier. Officers and committee (directors) of the Bank of Martin County on February 8, 1907, were: Wheeler Martin, Sr., J. G. Staton, J. L. Hassell, A. Anderson, S. L. Godard, V. R. Taylor, F. L. Gladstone, B. H. Roberson and J. G. Godard; finance committee members were W. C. Manning, Wheeler Martin, Sr., and J. G. Godard.

In January, 1917, the Bank of Martin County was succeeded by Martin County Savings and Trust Company, the latter suspending operations on February 28, 1925, following a heavy deposit withdrawal that day.

The Farmers and Merchants Bank, the third financial institution in the county, opened for business on June 1, 1905, in the store building formerly occupied by Thomas J. Latham. In addition to the president, Chas. D. Carstarphen, Sr., was vice president and A. D. Mizelle served as assistant cashier. Other than the officers-directors, Kader Lilley, Dr. J. B. H. Knight, N. S. Peel, John D. Simpson and W. Henry Crawford were members of the board.

Sold to Branch Banking and Trust Company on February 13, 1930, Farmers and Merchants Bank was the only financial institution of its kind in Martin County to make it through the depression years without limiting services or closing. Dr. John Dawson Biggs, Jr., president of the bank at the time, surrendered a fortune in saving the bank, but the depositors never lost a penny.

"The Enterprise", reporting a meeting of the bank committee (directors) on January 16, 1907, listed the officials, as follows: Dennis Simmons Biggs, president; Chas. D. Carstarphen, vice president; Frank F. Fagan, cashier; A. D. Mizelle, assistant cashier; and N. S. Peel, T. J. Smith, A. Hassell, W. H. Crawford, John D. Simpson, Ambrose Owens of Plymouth, R. W. Salsbury of Hamilton, George P. McNaughton of Everetts and George D. Roberson of Robersonville, members of the committee. The report added that an eight percent dividend, amounting to $2,000, was declared and that $3,000 had been added to the surplus fund.

In this county there was little activity on the financial front until the early part of 1917. "The Enterprise" in its January 19, 1917, edition reported quite a flurry in the banking field. It said:

"Several of the substantial stockholders in the Bank of Martin County disposed of their holdings, and incorporated another institution, The Peoples Bank, with James Grist Staton as president and Chas. H. Godwin, Sr., as cashier. The incorporators were, James G. Staton, A. R. Dunning, W. J. Whitaker and Clayton Moore.

"At the same time there was a proposed consolidation of the Bank of Martin County, the first such incorporated institution of its kind in the county, with the Farmers and Merchants Bank. The name of Bank of Martin County was to be changed to Martin County Savings and Trust Company, designed to handle estates, guardianships, real estate, etc., with little or no commercial banking activities. It was proposed to change the name of the Farmers and Merchants Bank to Farmers Bank of Martin. The prime movers in the proposed consolidation were Dr. John D. Biggs of the F. and M. bank and Joseph G. Godard of the Bank of Martin County.

"Construction of the Peoples Bank, now the Professional Office Building on Williamston's West Main Street, was soon to get underway, but the consolidation plans of the other two financial institutions never materialized, as far as the public was concerned. However, Bank of Martin County became known as Martin County Savings and Trust Company."

"The Enterprise" told about the organization of The Peoples Bank, as follows:

"Following preliminary discussions the month before, a group of citizens, representing 400 shares, met in the old Lotus Club in February, 1917, and formally organized The Peoples Bank, Williamston. Officers were named: James G. Staton, president; J. L. Hassell, first vice president; V. R. Taylor, second vice president; Chas. H. Godwin, Sr., cashier; and Dunning and Moore, counselors. The following directors were elected, in addition to the officers: James A. Everett, W. C. Manning, Leslie T. Fowden, Sr., Arthur Anderson, J. Dawson Lilley, M. P. Taylor, J. S. Griffin, R. T. Griffin, S. E. Hardison, W. A. Perry, G. W. Hardison, Henry D. Peel, W. J. Whitaker, H. B. York, J. Henry Wynn, J. L. Holliday, J. J. Manning, R. J. Peel, A. B. Ayers and G. H. Harrison. Gilbert and Luther Peel were named bookkeepers.

"Plans were made for opening the bank in the Hoyt Building on West Main Street where the Collins Department Store was located before the structure was burned in 1978.

"J. G. Staton, J. L. Hassell, J. D. Ward and V. R. Taylor were named to attend to all details for the erection of a new building."

Then in its January 26, 1917, edition "The Enterprise" carried the following story:

"Following the consolidation of the Bank of Martin County, observing its seventeenth birthday anniversary on January 22, 1917, with the Farmers and Merchants Bank, new officers were elected. The Bank of Martin County became known as Martin County Savings and Trust Company, and continued to occupy the offices on the southeastern corner, Main and Smithwick streets. Officers were: J. G. Godard, president; John L. Hassell, first vice president; John D. Biggs, second vice president; John E. Pope, Sr., cashier and A. J. Manning, J. G. Godard, J. L. Hassell, John D. Biggs, T. F. Harrison, Wheeler Martin, B. A. Critcher, C. D. Carstarphen, H. K. Green, and F. L. Salsbury, directors.

"Godard, the first to organize a bank in the county, told about the operations of the Bank of Martin County when it occupied the building on the southwest corner of Main and Smithwick streets. 'The bank', he said, 'made $200 the first year, and that was made possible when the cashier drew no salary. At the end of its first 16 years the bank had $300,000 in deposits'."

There were few banks in Martin County at that time. Many had closed throughout the nation. Twenty banks in New York suspended specie payments. The Pennsylvania legislature legalized the suspension of banks and passed a relief bill. (Enterprise, June 25, 1920).

The 1920 financial crash reached the banking field in Williamston on June 29, 1922, when the comparatively new Peoples Bank closed its doors. The directors had managed to keep the bank operating since 1921, but a $63,000 withdrawal of deposits on June 29, 1922, was the telling blow.

"The Enterprise", in its edition of November 18, 1925, said:

"With only the Farmers and Merchants Bank operating in Williamston on September 18, 1925, and no banks functioning at the time in Jamesville, Plymouth or Roper, an effort was made by Kinston and Ayden financiers to open a national bank in Williamston that year. A charter was denied and the proposed bank never opened even after plans were made to buy the old Peoples Bank building.

On March 29, 1935, W. H. Woolard, a Martin native and executive vice president of Guaranty Bank, announced that Guaranty would open a branch in Williamston. Guaranty was headquartered in Greenville at the time. Coming here from Elizabeth City, A. G. Small was the first cashier of the Williamston branch, followed by D. V. Clayton, Sr., who came up from Plymouth in 1935. When Guaranty merged with Wachovia in May, 1960, Clayton went with the latter bank, serving until his retirement the latter part of 1966. Clay Kirkman came to Williamston in 1961, and succeeded Clayton when he (Clayton) retired.

Wachovia opened a second bank in Williamston on December 15, 1975. A new building was constructed in Martin Plaza on the Boulevard.

When it opened for business in Williamston, Guaranty operated in the old Farmers and Merchants Bank Building, now occupied by Catos. It later moved to the old Peoples Bank building, operating there until it occupied a new banking house on the southeast corner of Main and Haughton streets.

Other than the openings of local branches by Branch Banking and Trust Company on Washington Street in 1966, and one by Wachovia Bank and Trust Company on December 15, 1975, banking remained unchanged in Williamston until November 29, 1972, when First Citizens Bank and Trust Company was granted a charter to open a bank in the town. Fred E. Oglesby was named executive officer, and after training at the bank's branch in Bayboro, Jeanette Thomas, Elsie Price Johnson, Deborah Bowen, Joyce Price and Dianne Phelps joined the local branch staff for the opening on June 12, 1973, in the H. L. Barnhill office building on the Boulevard across from Rogers Warehouse.

First Citizens purchased a sizable lot, corner of Main and Elm streets, in 1977 for a new home. The lot was cleared and construction work was started on the building in June, 1978. The bank held a formal opening in its beautiful new home during the week beginning on February 18, 1979. The event attracted considerable attention throughout the area.

A struggling career marked the history of banking in Everetts, but the Great Depression finally brought it to an end along with just about every other bank in the county.

A certificate of incorporation for Planters and Merchants Bank, Everetts, was filed about the middle of June, 1914. At that time V. R. Taylor was named president and W. C. Manning, J. L. Wynne, J. T. Barnhill, S. F. Everett, A. R. Dunning and R. A. Bailey served as directors along with the president.

J. M. Leggett, a half-brother to Marvin Leggett late of Martin County, helped promote the organization, and he was in line for cashier. For some reason the Planters and Merchants did not open for business until January 26, 1916. Leggett, who was to serve as cashier, accepted a position with a bank in Littleton during the meantime. It is possible that a qualified cashier was not available at the time, and, then the early certified bank could have had trouble selling sufficient stock. Anyway, it was said that Van G. Taylor, son of V. R. Taylor, studied at Oak Ridge for about one year, and he assumed the duties of cashier in January, 1916.

Officers listed as serving the bank in January, 1916, included V. R. Taylor, president; J. L. Wynne, vice president, and V. G. Taylor, cashier.

Officers and directors of the bank on March 10, 1920, were: V. R. Taylor, president; J. T. Barnhill, first vice president; J. H. D. Peel, second vice president; V. G. Taylor, cashier; R. N. Grimes, assistant cashier.

The incorporators included: E. A. and S. H. Clark, B. F. Perry, Bailey and Barnhill, Willie A. Teel, J. S. Ayers, Whit Moore, C. B. Roebuck, George D. Burroughs, John W. Williams, J. L. Wynne, J. W. Cherry, W. C. Hardy, J. M. Edmondson, Charles T. Peel, G. R.

Silverthorne, F. L. Teel, D. J. Meeks, S. F. Everett, R. H. Lanier, S. S. Bailey, V. R. Taylor, V. G. Taylor, and J. N. Rogerson.

Issuing a financial statement on January 4, 1917, Planters and Merchants Bank reported $64,735.40 in assets. Deposits were $45,082.69. V. G. Taylor was cashier at the time, and V. R. Taylor, R. A. Bailey and J. T. Barnhill were listed as directors.

After serving the town and community for nearly fifteen years, Planters and Merchants was forced to close on December 10, 1930, when a Norfolk bank withdrew its financial support. The Everetts bank was re-opened on January 9, 1931, the depositors reportedly having come to some agreement, enabling the action. The bank then operated until May 21, 1932, when it was ordered closed by Gurney P. Hood, State Banking commissioner. Paul Bailey served the bank as cashier from about the middle of 1924 until the May 21, 1932, closing.

A charter for the Farmers Banking and Trust Company in Robersonville was signed by the secretary of state April 23, 1917, when the population of the town was listed at 1200. The organization had been completed March 14, 1917, with capital stock paid in amounting to $15,000. Samuel T. Everett was president, L. J. Roberson was vice president and Leon Wilson was second vice president with J. Q. Seawell as cashier. The directors were Harvey Roberson, Lester House, W. A. White, J. Bynum Roberson, W. L. Johnson, G. A. Crofton, L. J. Roberson, Roy Whichard, W. G. Barnhill, Z.D.F. White, Ernest Carson, J. A. Coffield, W. R. Jenkins, B. H. Roberson, Jesse Keel, F. S. Purvis, Leon Wilson, W. H. Holliday, J. A. Roebuck and H. L. Everett. The finance committee included Harvey Roberson, O. P. Roberson, C. A. Roberson, H. L. Everett and T. L. House. A. R. Dunning was chief counsel. Among those listed as incorporators and not listed above were Wiley Rogerson, Lester House, W. T. Hurst, J. L. Corey, L. J. J. Smith, Silas House, Thomas L. Johnson, Jasper Johnson, Hyman Warren, N. C. Everett, Henry Taylor, L. J. Roberson, R. J. Nelson, J. A. Coffield, E. C. House, W. A. Roberson, E. Carson, J. H. Moore, J. C. Cummings, Augustus Johnson, C. D. Jenkins, W. R. Roebuck, G. L. Roberson, Simon T. Everett, J. H. Roberson, L. R. Whichard, Lida E. Parker, M. H. Warren, W. S. White, L. C. C. Warren, H. N. Warren, L. T. Roberson.

Its charter signed by the secretary of state on March 24, 1920, when the population of the town was 373, the Bank of Parmele was headed by N. O. Van Nortwick as president, J. T. Stokes as vice president, and F. S. Powell as cashier. Directors included L.

Dan Roebuck, J. H. Roebuck, F. S. Powell, J. T. Stokes, J. C. Wynne, J. G. Godard, J. Q. Andrews and W. O. Manning. Incorporators other than those listed as officers and directors included J. C. Wynne, J. L. Speight, T. K. Weyher, W. H. Harrell, W. K. Roberson, W. H. Ward, J. Waldo Grimes, Elbert S. Peel. Although chartered for 60 years, the bank closed its doors the latter part of 1923.

The Southern Bank and Trust Company, organized as the Bank of Mount Olive in 1901, came to Robersonville July 16, 1971, and opened for business in the former A. O. Roberson & Company building on Main Street with R. A. Gurganus as the chief executive officer for the branch office. About a year later the bank moved into a new building which was constructed of colonial design on a lot on the west side of North Main Street where the home of the late Dr. Jesse Ward had formerly been located. After the resignation of R. A. Gurganus, Bruce D. Akers came to Robersonville as assistant vice president and in 1978 was named also as a member of the local board.

I. L. Smith, Jr., merchant and farmer, with his friend, Frank B. Holding, a member of Southern's general board and an executive vice president of First-Citizens Bank and Trust Company, were instrumental in bringing Southern to Robersonville. Smith remains a member of the local board along with W. M. (Billy) Green, president of Carolina Peanuts; Troy B. Warren, farmer and manager of Agrico Farm Supplies; L. Wilson Wynne, farmer and dealer in Smith-Douglass fertilizer; Dr. Victor Ng, physician, and Beverly Congelton, merchant and farmer of Stokes.

By 1978 Southern had opened many branch offices in smaller towns and its assets had grown from $27,533,000 in 1971 to $77,329,884 as of the close of business at the end of 1978.

Its first venture outside of Edgecombe County, the Edgecombe Bank and Trust Company opened a branch office in Oak City February 7, 1947, when Clarence Brown came over from the Tarboro home office of the bank to manage the new outlet with Mrs. Mary Ross (H. J.) McCracken serving as the first teller. (A hearing had been held October 22, 1946, by the State Banking Commission.) Brown was soon to be replaced by Blonzie Pearson Harrell, now Mrs. Blonzie N. (Lawrence) Hyman, who came over from Williamston where she had been associated with one of the farm agencies. John L. Knox, the current manager, came to the bank in May of 1976. The bank then had two tellers, Mrs. McCracken and Mrs. Harrell with Liewana (Tieny) Rawls as bookkeeper. As of late 1978 the bank had two tellers, Mrs. McCracken and Beverly Butler Bowen with Helen Sue Carlton working at the counter on Fridays, along with Rawls as bookkeeper and Knox as manager.

The members of the original local board were J. H. Ayers, chairman, J. C. Ross, Wheeler B. Daniels, J. F. Crisp. In 1968 Daniels and Ross remained on the board but the places of Ayers and Crisp were taken by R. A. Haislip, Jr., and Lawrence Hyman. The 1978 board list includes the names of R. A. Haislip, Jr., chairman, W. B. Daniels, F. B. Worsley and J. C. Johnson (mayor). Don Matthews came on the board as a fifth member in the early 1970s. J. C. Johnson had come on the board after the death of Ross, and later R. Hilton Everett of Hamilton was named to replace Matthews after the latter's death. The Oak City plant was modernized in 1955. A completely new and modern building was erected and opened May 24, 1976, with the old structure being torn down to provide space for parking on the north side of the new structure. Mrs. McCracken was on vacation when the first robber hit the bank in 1957 but was present for the next three raids on its money supply, these coming January 29, 1975, December 19, 1975 and April 1, 1977.

As a whole, Edgecombe Bank had deposits of $1 million in 1943, $15,826,154.60 in 1968 and $60,092.00 in 1978.

Although both interest paid on savings and charged on loans in 1978 were ranging up to 9.35 percent on savings and 11.25 on loans, it was not that way back in the early 1940s as the interest paid on savings up to $1,000 was generally one percent and nothing over that sum, loans were made at a modest two percent.

While the town's population was only 225 on September 29, 1910, a report was filed at that time on the incorporation of the Bank of Oak City, Ben M. Worsley was listed as cashier and H. S. Everett as president in 1919. The incorporators who secured a charter for a period of 60 years, included S. J. Everett, E. B. Higgs, H. K. Harrell, J. C. Ross, H. S. Everett, John L. Hines, Casper Brothers, R. H. Salsbury, Justus Everett, Joseph Early, H. C. Harrington, Miss Hattie Everett, E. H. Turner, W. J. Johnson, Frank P. Shields, Dr. John D. Biggs, J. S. Salsbury, T. T. Council, S. E. Hines, J. B. Harrell, Arch Harrell, Peter Belflower, George Daniels, L. F. Belflower, Jesse Crisp, John H. Etheridge, Jr., A. Burnett, O. M. Mayo, J. H. C. Johnson, J. T. Haislip, W. D. Jordan. The bank closed in the early 1930s along with many other banks in the state and nation. The bank is reported to have been one of five in Martin County January 7, 1911, and had resources of $15,808.18. Just us Everett was president at that time and the directors were H. S. Everett, H. K. Harrell and J. C. Ross who was later to serve on the local board of Edgecombe Bank and Trust Company when it opened a branch in Oak City. Ross was also the father of Mrs. Mary Ross McCracken, still a teller with the Edgecombe bank in 1978.

Mrs. McCracken recalls that the Bank of Oak City had quarters in a building which had a meeting place on the second floor in which town officials held meetings and some Oak City High School seniors received their diplomas in ceremonies there. In the late 1920s, she says, Ben M. Worsley was cashier and Mrs. Mattie Allsbrook a teller. The first Bank of Oak City building was burned, it is said, but it is not verified as to when nor at what time other quarters were secured.

The Bank of Hamilton was organized March 6, 1907, with offices on the West side of Front Street in a small building in the corner of the yard owned in 1978 by Mr. and Mrs. Norman Everett. According to old records the bank paid Willowby Roberson $2.50 per month as rent. The first president was C. H. Baker and the cashier was Edward A. Council. Directors were J. S. Carr, Jr., of Durham, H. S. Everett and H. K. Harrell, both of Oak City, W. L. Sherrod, T. B. Slade, C. H. Baker, J. P. Boyle, J. B. Anthony, Harry Waldo, F. L. Haislip, W. S. Rhodes all of Hamilton, and B. G. Rogers of Creedmoor.

On July 30, 1907, Winston and Everett were appointed attorneys for the bank. The amount of its authorized capital was then $25,000 divided into $500 shares of a par value of $50 each. The stockholders were T. B. Slade, Harry Waldo, W. L. Sherrod, J. B. Anthony, T. H. Council, J. P. Boyle. The bank had begun business with $5000, capital stock. The bank filed its first report of condition at the end of business December 3, 1907, showing loans and discounts of $79.75, banking house and fixtures of $570.65, cash items of $1,104.76, $76 in gold, $1,116.97 in silver coins, amount due from banks and bankers $3,219 and expense of $548.03. The capital stock was still $5,000, deposits $8,285.47, not including $615.00 in time certificates and total assets were listed at $14,610.71. E. A. Council was still the cashier and directors were C. H. Baker, T. B. Slade, P. L. Salsbury and Harry Waldo.

Edward A. Council resigned as cashier August 25, 1912, and F. L. Haislip was named to succeed him, holding that position until his retirement April 3, 1935. On May 26, 1913, a committee composed of F. L. Gladstone, R. W. Salsbury and F. L. Haislip was appointed to make plans for a new building to be located on a lot the bank had purchased on the east side of Front Street on the corner of Front and Liberty streets, (Site of Wachovia's branch office as of 1978). The building was completed in 1914 at a cost of $5,497.03. J. A. Campbell of Murfreesboro was the contractor and much of the material came by train to Hassell and by boat to Hamilton. Bricks were purchased from Tuttle and Bell of Edenton and shipped by boat. Delivered price of the vault door was $110, glass fronts cost $142.63 and birch wood fixtures, ordered from Grand Rapids Mfg. Co., of Charlotte, cost $385.00.

After the death of C. H. Baker in 1914, R. W. Salsbury was elected president and served in that capacity until the bank merged with Guaranty Bank & Trust Company of Greenville April 29, 1935. The Bank of Hamilton remained open during the depression when most across the nation were closed.

The bank was robbed in 1934 when, under the cover of darkness, entry was gained by breaking through the back door of the post office and cutting a way through a wall into the bank. Acetylene flames were used to cut through the vault and safe walls. The loss was said to have been about $3700. Neither robbers nor cash taken were ever found. The directors of the bank at the time of the merger with Guaranty Bank & Trust Company were F. L. Haislip, D. G. Matthews, W. S. Rhodes, P. L. Salsbury. The bank then operated as a teller's window out of the bank office in Williamston until the later merger of Guaranty and Wachovia. Mrs. Lucille D. (Mrs. Geo. T.) Ward joined the staff in May, 1946. Mrs. Irma N. Taylor (Mrs. B. B.) was with the bank of Hamilton from May, 1918 until January, 1922, going with Guaranty Bank in September, 1942.

Banking History

Taken from the North Carolina Year Book section on banks and bankers, the following is a chronological account of banks in Martin County listed in the editions through 1916:

1902: Bank of Martin County, J. G. Godard, cashier. Capital $5,000.

1903: Bank of Martin County had capital of $10,000. Bank of Robersonville, J. C. Robertson, cashier.

1905: Bank of Martin County had capital of $12,000.

1906: Bank of Martin County. D. S. Biggs, president; J. G. Godard, cashier, $15,000 capital, $8,000 surplus and profits. Farmers and Merchants Bank, D. S. Biggs, president; Frank

Fagan, cashier. Capital of $15,000. Bank of Robersonville. J. C. Roberson, cashier, capital $5,000; surplus and profits, $1,000.

1907: Bank of Martin County. Wheeler Martin, president; J. G. Godard, cashier. Capital $15,000, surplus and profits, $10,000. Farmers and Merchants. D. S. Biggs, president; Frank Fagen, cashier. Capital $25,000, surplus and profits, $1,200. Bank of Robersonville, J. C. Robertson, cashier. Capital $15,000, surplus and profits, $10,000.

1910: Bank of Hamilton, Charles H. Baker, president; E. A. Council, cashier. Bank of Robersonville, R. H. Hargrove, president; J. C. Robertson, cashier; J. A. Mizelle, assistant cashier. Bank of Martin County, Wheeler Martin, president; J. G. Godard, cashier. Farmers and Merchants Bank, J. D. Biggs, president; F. F. Fagen, cashier.

1915: Bank of Oak City, H. K. Harrell, president; B. M. Worsley, cashier. Bank of Jamesville, J. E. Smithwick, president; Asa J. Manning, cashier. Bank of Hamilton, R. W. Salsbury, president; B. L. Long, vice-president; F. L. Haislip, cashier.

1916: Bank of Martin County, J. G. Godard, president; C. H. Godwin, cashier. Farmers and Merchants Bank, J. D. Biggs, president; Robert Harrison, cashier, J. L. Rogerson, assistant cashier. Bank of Hamilton, R. W. Salsbury, president; B. L. Long, vice president; F. L. Haislip, cashier, Bank of Jamesville, J. E. Smithwick, president; John D. Lilley, cashier. Bank of Oak City, H. K. Harrell, president; B. M. Worsley, cashier.

SAVINGS AND LOAN

According to an item published in the Tarboro Southerner under date of May 29, 1890, the earliest building and loan association in Martin County was that formed in Hamilton at the time with 18 members, 36 shares being subscribed. Officers elected were T. B. Slade, president; T. H. Pritchard, secretary and treasurer. No other information on this association has been uncovered.

The oldest association in continuous service in Martin County is the Martin County Savings and Loan Association (the name was changed in 1956 from the original Martin County Building and Loan Association) and it acquired the first home of its own in 1957. This ended a sort of nomad existence that had been endured since its founding May 23, 1910, by seven men—A. R. Dunning, S. A. Newell, J. G. Godard, Charles H. Godwin, Warren H. Biggs, W. C. Manning and J. W. Watts, Sr., who gathered in the bank of Martin County in Williamston and subscribed to a total of

60 shares of stock at $100 per share. The association was reorganized or solidified in May of 1914 at the insistence of Wheeler Martin, Jr., later to serve as secretary, treasurer and attorney of the association. He served as secretary until his death in May 1954. From 1914 until 1917 the records were kept in his office.

After 1917 the officers and directors met in local banks, business houses, offices of professional or business people and kept more or less complete minutes when meetings were held. It is recorded in Raleigh that there were some months when no meetings were held and this may explain the lack of continuity in the available minutes during the early "growing" years. The records were kept part of this time in the Farmers and Merchants Bank by J. C. Anderson, J. E. Pope, A. D. Mizelle and finally Asa T. Crawford who acted as bookkeeper and teller with the records being kept in the office of the Dennis Simmons Lumber Company until 1926.

Mrs. Vella Andrews Wynne Hunt took charge of the books in 1926 and when Wheeler Martin, Jr., resigned January 5, 1927, as treasurer she took over the duties of that office and the minutes of that date show the directors had worked out an arrangement with Farmers and Merchants Bank for counter and vault space. The growing business then observed regular hours and services usually associated with the savings and loan type of business. The association kept its place when Branch Banking and Trust Company took over Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1930.

Some of the old minutes disclose that the association financed the first electric light plant in Williamston as well as the old S. R. Biggs Iron and Motor Company which manufactured such items as plows and similar farm equipment designed by the late Joseph Woolard of Martin County. It also noted that, during the first World War, the association purchased $6,000 in War Bonds, a sizable contribution to the defense at that time. During World War II the association purchased over $200,000 in bonds and, as issuing agent, sold many thousands of dollars in bonds to its patrons. The association also lent over a million dollars to veterans for building and buying homes under the provisions of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act.

Having the distinction of being the oldest financial institution organized and continuing to do business in Martin County, the association opened a branch office in Windsor in neighboring Bertie County.

In March 1922, the minutes show, J. G. Godard had served as president, then C. H. Godwin and P. B. Cone were next in line. W. C. Manning had also served as vice president and S. A. Newell as secretary and treasurer.

In a meeting of the directors May 8, 1931, C. A. Harrison was elected president on motion by then president P. B. Cone and seconded by W. C. Manning, Jr. Harrison remained in the office until his death in late 1939 and C. D. Carstarphen was made president January 8, 1940, moving up from a place on the board of directors. The association had been under the direction of only two presidents from 1940 until the end of 1978, Carstarphen serving from January 8, 1940 until January 30, 1956, when N. C. Green was named president and continued into 1979, starting his 23rd year.

The association moved from $21,290.25 in assets to $140,209.07 at the close of 1925 but the pace quickened after that and at the end of 1975 had hit $18,372,714. The close of business December 31, 1978, found the assets at $27,348,339. Loan figures at the end of 1978 were $25,065,772 and savings had hit $24,536,133.

Starting at about one percent in its early days, the association gradually increased its dividend rate on savings to three percent, four, five, five and a quarter and announced at the end of 1978 that the dividend payment of passbook savings would be six percent, a figure in line with most savings organizations in the general area.

At the close of 1978, President N. C. Green was joined by a board of directors who were re-elected. W. C. Griffin was vice-president, F. Webb Williams, Jr., a director, secretary-treasurer and manager. Directors were H. Leman Barnhill, W. Marvin Baker. E. R. Saunders, C. Urbin Rogers, Clarence W. Griffin, also association attorney. The office personnel included Glynn J. Leggett as assistant secretary-treasurer, Janie G. Roberson and Mary S. Perry, the latter with the Windsor office of the association, continue as assistant secretary-treasurer and Janie R. Rawls as assistant secretary-treasurer and secretary to the manager. Other staff members continuing in service include Sue C. Hardison, Joyce W. Miller, Jean Dickens, Becky H. Lilley and Larry Woolard. Woolard is in charge of appraisals.

The Martin County Building and Loan Association (now Martin County Savings and Loan Association) was organized on May 19, 1910.

The following officers were elected: Jos. G. Godard, president; Wm. C. Manning, Sr., vice president; S. Atwood Newell, secretary-treasurer; A. R. Dunning, attorney; and J. W. Watts, Sr., Chas. H. Godwin, and Warren H. Biggs, finance committeemen.

(Enterprise, May 20, 27, 1910)

A number of citizens of the town met in the office of Martin and Martin on Thursday night of last week (May 28) and organized a Building and Loan Association with the following officers: C. H. Godwin, President, Dr. P. B. Cone, Vice-President; Wheeler Martin, Sec'y and Treasurer; Board of Directors: John D. Biggs, Dr. J. H. Saunders, A. R. Dunning, A. D. Mizell and K. B. Crawford.

Three hundred shares have been subscribed and the books will remain open for sixty days, when it is hoped to secure another two hundred shares, which will form a good working basis.—(The Enterprise, Friday, June 5, 1914)

The Peoples Building and Loan Association in Robersonville (changed to Peoples Savings and Loan in 1961) was organized February 7, 1917, with R. A. Bailey as president and D. R. Chandler as secretary. During the 61-year history of the association four men have served as president and three men as secretary-treasurer.

After helping to organize the association, Bailey continued as president for over 20 years, 1917-1937; B. L. Stokes served as president from 1938 until his resignation effective December 31, 1945; S. L. Roberson moved up in 1946 from vice president to serve as president for 27 years and was elected director emeritus in 1973 as he relinquished the presidency; Charles L. Wilson, Jr., moved up from vice president in 1973 to his current position as president.

D. R. Chandler served the association as secretary-treasurer a single year, 1917-1918 and was succeeded by D. R. Everett who filled the post from 1918 until December, 1945, at which time E. B. Whichard was made secretary-treasurer and continues in that post at the close of 1978.

Some of those who served as directors of the association over the years, a few also having served as vice presidents, include Paul D. Roberson, currently attorney after succeeding the late J. C. Smith, J. Gilbert Smith, G. H. Cox, W. H. Gray, I. L. Smith, Sr., Charles R. Gray, I. M. Little, Dr. J. M. Kilpatrick, Charles L. Wilson, Jr., Dixie D. Roberson, Jackson A. Sharp, E. B. Whichard, I. L.

Smith, Jr., H. C. Norman, R. J. Nelson, J. L. Williams and Mike H. Johnson.

Officers and directors of the association at the close of 1978 were: Charles L. Wilson, Jr., president; Jack A. Sharp, vice president; Ernest B. Whichard, secretary-treasurer; director emeritus, Sherwood L. Roberson; directors, Paul D. Roberson (attorney), J. L. Williams, Mike H. Johnson, Irvin L. Smith, Jr.; Melba Jenkins, assistant secretary-treasurer; Etta Moore, bookkeeper, and Jewel B. Roberson, clerk.

Operating in rented quarters, on Railroad Street for many years, the association moved into its new building on the north side of Railroad Street in July of 1977, held open house July 18 and a ribbon-cutting July 19.

The first loan by the association was to J. H. and Pearl Everett in the amount of $1500 under date of 1-1-1918 and it was noted late in 1978 that another loan had been made for repair to the house involved in the first loan. Another sidelight in the history of the association is the fact that for more than 36 years Ada Andrews Williams notarized the statements required to be filed with the state office.

The association has shown steady growth, having assets of $51,955 in 1945, $63,120 in 1946, $56,195 in 1947, $89,652 in 1950, $1,323,803 in 1970, and $4,284,886 in 1978.

The dividend rate on savings accounts was three percent in 1950, three and a quarter in 1956, three and a half in 1957, four in 1959, four and a half last quarter of 1966, quarterly, four and three quarters in 1969, five in 1970 and six in 1978.

At the end of 1978 the association had loans in process in the amount of $1,100,450 of which 17 were construction in the amount of $450,900 and 21 involved purchases in the amount of $501,950, the others being share loans.

CHAPTER VI

WEATHER

Martin County is located in the northeastern part of North Carolina bounded on the northwest by Halifax, on the north and northeast by Bertie County, on the east by Washington County, and on the southwest and west by Beaufort, Pitt and Edgecombe counties. The Roanoke River forms the entire northeastern boundary of the county. Williamston, the county seat, is about 100 miles southwest of Norfolk, Va., and about 100 miles northeast of Raleigh, the capital of the state.

Irregularly oblong in shape, the county's extreme northwest-southeast dimension is about 42 miles, and its average northeast and southwest dimension about 12 miles. The total area is 464 square miles or 296,960 acres, and the present population (1970) is 24,730.

Martin County lies almost entirely in what is known as the flatwoods of the Coastal Plain section of the state, and the general relief is that of a flat plain, with undulating or gently rolling to rolling areas near the streams. The surface features vary in different sections of the county. Around Williamston and northwest of that place along the highway through Hamilton and Oak City the surface is mostly level, gently rolling or rolling. Some of the slopes bordering the river swamp are steep, whereas along some streams in the central and eastern sections of the county the slopes are gentle or moderately steep. The inter-stream areas range from level to undulating. The northwestern, western, southern and southeastern sections of the county are flat.

Some of the extensive flat areas are locally called pocosins, largest of which is Great Swamp in the southeastern part of the county; another is between Hassell and Parmele. Smaller pocosin-like areas occur elsewhere. Along Conoho Creek and Roanoke River are small broken terraces that lie 10 to 30 feet below the uplands and have a level or undulating surface. One area of first-bottom land, adjacent to the Roanoke River, near the mouth of Conoho Creek, is less than 10 feet above sea level. Along the Roanoke from the Halifax County line to two miles below Poplar Point Landing, the land rises abruptly from the river bottom to a height ranging from 30 to 60 feet. The slopes to the other streams are gradual and well rounded.

There is little difference of elevation in Martin County. The highest point, in the northwestern part of the county, is about 95 feet above sea level. At Oak City the elevation is 84 feet; at Robersonville, 70 feet; at uptown Williamston, which is one mile from the Roanoke River, 73 feet; at Hamilton, one-half mile from Roanoke River, 73 feet; and at Jamesville, on Roanoke River in the eastern part of the county, about 30 feet.

The weather, in addition to being one of the main topics of conversation, has been one of the most important factors in the county's history and development. According to a soil survey report made in 1928, the climate generally is mild and healthful; winters are comparatively mild, and the summers are long and rather hot. The mean winter temperature was said to be 47.2 degrees. There are usually three or four cold periods during the winter, and the temperature has been reported as low as 11 degrees below zero, although sub-zero readings are very unusual. The mean summer temperature is 78.3 degrees, with record highs of 105 having been reached in July and August and 106 degrees having been recorded once in September.

It is the extremes in temperatures which account for most of the conversation and interest, however. An unofficial report of the coldest weather ever experienced in Martin County is contained in a letter written in December, 1796, by Samuel Johnston—a Williamston resident at that time—to his brother-in-law, James Iredell, stating that the mercury had stood at 11 degrees below zero, but was up to 75 degrees a few days later. Johnston, who was a former governor and first United States Senator from North Carolina, moved to Williamston immediately after retiring from the Senate in 1793, and Iredell had been appointed an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1790 by President George Washington. Both Johnston and Iredell were attorneys and residents of Chowan County before entering public life; and Johnston, after living in Williamston for about 10 years, moved back to Edenton about 1803.

Elder C. B. Hassell made a number of entries in his diary about some extremely cold weather in Williamston. A notation made on January 23, 1857, says the mercury at daybreak was down to 6 degrees below zero, the coldest he ever remembered. He said he went to the Roanoke River and "walked upon its bosom, all being calm and serene now, with ice six inches thick upon its surface . .

It probably would have borne a two-horse wagon and load without giving way."

Several days prior to this, on January 20, 1857, Elder Hassell had written: "the coldest day in about 22 years. Mercury at daybreak or between daybreak and sunrise 2 degrees below zero. It stood at 1 degree below zero long after sunrise, but at 8 o'clock rose to 10 degrees above and during the day reached nearly 40 above. The deep snow, however, did not appear to give way, but remained piled up as it was the day before. The river was frozen across and up and down from Williamston wharf as far as the eye could reach. There was a great turnout by the young in sleighs and canoes, for the day was calm and clear and the streets and roads in good order for sleighing...This freezing over at the landing was also a rare thing, perhaps it had not occurred before in 50 years...."

Previous to 1857, Elder Hassell had written several times about extremely cold weather. On January 23, 1852, there is an entry, ". . . in consequence of the frequent and long spells of cold weather, Roanoke River is frozen over in a great many places from its source to its mouth. It is frozen across at Williamston, also at Plymouth." March 1, the same year, he recorded, "The winter is past, and it is thought to have been the driest and coldest that has been in 40 or 50 years, and some old men say in 80 or 90 years."

Another report on the extremes of cold weather reached in the county appeared in an article in The Enterprise of June 11, 1920, as follows:

"The great snow started falling in Martin County on January 18, 1857. It was still snowing on January 19, reaching an average depth of 14 inches, drifts ranging to four feet high. The mercury was 7 degrees above zero. The coldest days since 1832 was reported on January 20, 1857, when the mercury fell to 2 degrees below zero. The Roanoke was frozen from its point of origin to its mouth. People turned to sleighs and dugouts. Just about everything was closed down, and labor was limited to wood cutting and fire building.

"On January 22, 1857, another inch of snow fell, bringing the total depth that day to 15 inches. Walking abreast, about half dozen persons went up the river to Moore's Shipyard and back to the Williamston wharf.

"On January 23, the mercury went down to 6 degrees below zero, the coldest day since 1806. The river was frozen to a depth of six inches or more and thousands of people were walking on the Roanoke ice, some driving horses and buggies to Plymouth on the ice. Two companies of militia walked on the ice from Plymouth to Edenton. Mails had been stopped for a week, and the streamer 'Liberty' was frozen solid in the ice at Plymouth."

However, it remained for the deepest snow on record to fall during the twentieth century. The soil survey report, published in 1928, says there was a fall of 28 inches in March, 1927, preceded by one of 14 inches in January. The March 4, 1927, issue of The Enterprise says the big snowfall occurred on March 2nd and that travel and business were at a standstill for two days. A similar snow was reported on March 17, 1886, lasting until April 1. In 1866 there was a big snow, which occurred in midwinter, and the snow remained on the ground in the section for almost a month. The snow that accompanied the record low temperatures in January, 1857, undoubtedly lasted the longest, since the countryside was said to be icebound for nearly two months.

There are few reports about record high temperatures in the county, limited to official records, and these only go back to around 1936. The highest reported by the weather service during the 30-year period, 1936-1965, was 101 degrees, reached in June, 1954. However, at a weather station just across the Roanoke River at Lewiston in Bertie County, the thermometer reached 103 degrees in June, 1959. The weather reporting station at Williamston is located near the water's edge on the Roanoke and is only about 20 feet above mean sea level, while most of the town is some 50 feet higher, and the nearby bodies of water are said to have a moderating influence on the extremes of both high and low temperatures.

Average rainfall in the county ranges around 48 to 49 inches. Total precipitation for the driest year on record at Tarboro, nearest to the county where records go back into the 1800's, was 34.3 inches in 1921, and for the wettest year (1887), 80.88 inches. Rainfall is well distributed throughout the year, being heaviest in the summer and lightest in the fall. This is ideal for agriculture, and crops are seldom damaged by droughts, but heavy rains after dry periods cause damage on the imperfectly drained soils.

According to a newspaper report, the year 1861 was one of the driest on record in the county. There was little or no rain during the growing season after May, and on December 18, that year, it was said the wells were all dry and there wasn't enough corn to grind for bread. Then the following year, in 1862, there was a rainy period in June, said to be perhaps the worst since 1842, when a great July storm struck this section. Another rainy year was reported in 1867, when crops were said to be almost a total failure.

Although weather fluctuations have caused some damage to agriculture and industry over the years, these losses have not been as great as those suffered from tornadoes, hurricanes and floods which are more or less part of the natural phenomena to be expected on occasion by those who reside in Martin County. Something has been done to alleviate the threat from exceptionally high flood waters along the Roanoke River, construction of the Kerr Reservoir with its gates and controls along the North Carolina-Virginia line practically eliminating that possibility; but there is no way to head off tornadoes and hurricanes, although they have become less frequent in recent years.

Roanoke River floods were formerly considered a normal pattern for those who settled and tried to make a living along its banks. The "spring freshets" were looked forward to as being necessary to bring in the great quantities of fish caught at the fisheries; and allowance was made for the high waters in planting crops in low-lying areas.

Considerable damage had been done before, but the great flood in August, 1940, probably exceeded all others in the extent of the property loss suffered. It just about completely destroyed the paved highway over nearly four miles of the causeway north of the Ronaoke River bridge at Williamston, flooded several large industrial plants, including a fertilizer installation in Williasmton, the pulp mill in the lower part of the county near Plymouth, and others. The record high-water mark of the past 100 or more years was set at the weather station in Williamston on August 22, 1940, when the gauge at Roanoke River Bridge reached 20 feet and 5 inches, about 10½ feet above flood stage. Not too many years after this the Kerr Dam was constructed, and since then relatively little damage of consequence has been suffered by either agriculture or industry.

Possibly the most devastating tornado ever to strike the county occurred April 30, 1924. It destroyed or badly damaged an estimated 500 buildings, including the Flat Swamp Primitive Baptist Church on the Pitt-Martin line, and caused damage in excess of a million dollars. One person was killed on a Conoho farm and some 75 others injured, several seriously. The tornado came into Martin from Pitt County at Flat Swamp, passed between Robersonville and Everetts, touched down again just north of Williamston in the Conoho Creek section and crossed Roanoke River near Speller's Ferry before dissipating in Bertie County.

There have been several minor storms classed as tornadoes to strike in the county since then, but none with the devastating force of the one in 1924. Such storms usually occur in the spring or summer, although a few have been recorded at other times.

Hurricanes are another matter entirely, so far as this section is concerned. While there is no "normal" or regular path which they travel, the main course of a majority of hurricanes affecting the east coast of the United States is roughly a parabolic curve beginning in the West Indies, passing Florida and Cape Hatteras, then moving into the North Atlantic, and it is in this general region west of Hatteras that Martin County is located. Because of the tendency of hurricanes to follow this main pattern, the area off Hatteras has been given the nickname of "Hurricane Alley." Many hurricanes, however, depart from the general pattern and strike inland, and it is these that hit in this section.

The Weather Bureau of the U. S. Department of Commerce published "North Carolina Hurricanes" in 1962, containing a list of 132 recorded hurricanes or tropical storms that had struck North Carolina over a period of 376 years, starting with the one that hit the fleet of Sir Francis Drake off Roanoke Island June 23-26, 1586. There were a number of other reported storms, but they could not be authenticated and were not counted.

One of the most destructive storms in the entire list, so far as could be determined, was Hurricane "Hazel," which struck October 15, 1954. This was also Martin County's most destructive storm up to that time, with one injured and property loss estimated at more than a million dollars. A number of structures were unroofed and 2,000 or more homes and buildings in the county were said to have been damaged, in addition to considerable losses in farm crops. There were 19 known dead in the state and record amounts of rainfall in many sections.

The frost-free season in Martin County is long enough for maturing all the crops common to this region. At Lewiston, where the Peanut Belt Research Station is located, just across the Roanoke River from Martin County, the average freeze-free growing season is 212 days. The average date of last occurence in spring of a temperature as low as 32 degrees is about April 26; and the average date of the first occurence in fall of a temperature as low as 32 degrees is about November 4. Frosts have been recorded as late as April 26 and as early as October 10 in this county.

Williamston is the county seat and principal city of Martin County. The county lies in the northern part of the North Carolina Coastal Plain, an area of predominantly level country. Beginning in the east where the mouth of the Roanoke River narrows from the broad estuary emptying into the Albemarle Sound, Martin County extends upstream along the south bank of the river, having a length of some 40 miles. The river front is somewhat longer, due to curves in the river bed; for the same reason the width of the county is variable, ranging mostly between ten and fifteen miles, and comprising about half the width of the body of land lying between the Roanoke and Tar Rivers. Williamston is not far from the center of the county, lying adjacent to one of the broader southward curves of the river. The elevation of the weather instruments near the water's edge is about 20 feet above mean sea level; most of the city of Williamston is some 50 feet higher.

Martin County is only a few miles from the broad Albemarle Sound, less than fifty miles from the broader Pamlico Sound, and less than 75 miles from the Atlantic Ocean at the nearest points to the northeast, southeast and south. The Appalachian Mountains extend in a northeast-southwest line, at a distance from Williamston of about 175 miles at the nearest point on the northwest. This mountain barrier affords partial protection from cold winter outbreaks of air from the Great Plains, while the nearby bodies of water have a moderating influence on extremes of both high and low temperature. There is no record of any zero weather in Martin County, and only a few cases of 100 degrees heat.

The average length of freeze-free growing season at Williamston is about 210 days, extending from the first of April through the first week in November. There is some variation from these average figures from winter to winter, as well as from place to place over Martin County. The average date of last occurrence in spring of a temperature as low as 32 degrees F. is November 7; of 28 degrees F, November 15; of 20 degrees F, December 8. Although a temperature as low as 8 degrees F has been observed, the lowest to occur during the average winter is closer to 15 degrees F; a temperature down to 15-20 degrees F may be expected two or three times in most winters.

Summer days are warm throughout Martin County, but extremely hot weather is rare; since temperatures have been recorded, more than two-thirds of the years have passed without any

100 degree weather. Nights cool rapidly in summer, with the average temperature dropping below 68 deg. F at sunrise, even at the warmest time of year.

Average precipitation is very well distributed throughout the year in Martin County. Williamston records over a thirty year period indicate no month with less than half an inch of rainfall, and only a few with more than ten inches. More typically, most months get around three inches, with an increase during the summer to a little more than six inches. This is the time of year when rain is most needed for crops, and when water use by man, animals and machinery is greatest. The harvest season, in fall, is usually driest. Most of the precipitation falls as rain, but a little snow falls nearly every winter. This often melts as it falls, but an inch or more may accumulate on the ground once or twice in an average winter.

Winter rain and snow usually come as a result of moving low pressure storms; summer rainfall is mainly caused by thundershowers. These may occasionally produce some strong winds and hail. When this does occur, the area affected is usually very small; the likehood of hail in a given place in Martin County is very small. In late summer and early autumn, rainfall is sometimes increased by the passage of a tropical storm near the coast. Damaging wind from such a storm is rare.

Prevailing winds in Martin County are from southerly directions in spring and summer, and northerly in winter; northeasterlies prevail in the fall. The average wind speed near the earth's surface is about eight miles per hour; winds are usually a little lighter at night and a little higher in the early afternoon.

The sun shines about two-thirds of the daylight hours during the summer in Martin County, and about half the time in winter. Solar radiation ranges from an average of about 200 langleys per day in midwinter to nearly 600 in midsummer.

Relative humidity averages about 72 percent around the year, with a slightly higher average in the late summer and somewhat lower humidity in late winter and early spring. Relative humidity also is subject to variation from day to day. The most regular variation, however, is from day to night; it is usually highest at night and lower during most of the daylight hours. At early afternoon the average is between 50 and 60 percent.—Prepared at Raleigh, N. C., North Carolina State University; Albert V. Hardy, State Climatologist.

STATION HISTORY

River and rainfall observations were begun at the Roanoke River bridge, Williamston, by Carl Hugh Spruill in 1930. Temperature observations were added late in 1952.

Assisted in later years by fellow bridgetenders, Mr. Spruill ably served as chief weather observer at the river bridge on Roanoke River, Williamston, until his retirement. Faithful and diligent, Mr. Spruill was recognized as one of the best weather observers in the state.

Before his retirement, Mr. Spruill was aided in handling the weather data by T. E. Davis, LeRoy Beach, Wayne Coltrain and Jesse Rogers.

As keeper of the Roanoke River bridge at Williamston, Mr. Spruill volunteered much of his time to keeping weather records. Largely through his efforts, important weather data were made available during a long number of years.

CLIMATOLOGICAL SUMMARY
Average Temperature (°F)

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Ann'l
1952											53.0	43.4	
1953	49.5	49.3	53.8	61.4	73.6	75.0	78.8	76.2	72.2	63.6	51.2	46.3	62.6
1954	44.7	49.9	52.1	64.5	64.8	75.3	78.6	79.0	74.2	64.3	50.8	42.5	61.7
1955	40.4	45.2	56.7	64.8	69.9	71.5	81.0	79.0	73.0	62.2	51.6	40.4	61.3
1956	40.3	49.5	51.3	59.2	68.1	76.3	78.7	77.5	70.3	64.7	51.9	53.4	61.8
1957	43.0	49.3	50.3	64.1	69.1	77.1	78.2	76.5	75.1	57.7	53.6	46.8	61.7
1958	38.2	38.3	47.1	60.2	68.8	73.9	81.5	78.3	70.4	60.2	55.4	39.1	59.3
1959	42.7	46.2	51.1	61.5	71.4	74.9	78.2	79.1	72.0	63.7	51.9	47.0	61.6
1960	46.7	44.1	41.4	64.8	68.6	76.0	76.5	79.6	72.7	63.5	55.4	38.1	60.6
1961	39.2	47.6	56.4	56.4	65.9	74.5	80.0	78.6	74.8	60.6	54.0	43.8	61.0
1962	42.0	47.4	48.8	60.3	72.5	74.7	77.2	77.2	70.4	64.1	50.2	40.5	60.4
1963	40.6	40.1	56.5	61.6	66.1	74.0	77.5	77.7	68.8	62.1	53.5	37.4	59.7
1964	44.8	42.3	53.4	62.7	69.8	76.9	78.2	75.9	71.7	58.9	56.5	49.0	61.7
1965	43.3	44.7	48.6	59.6	72.3	73.4	77.8	79.1	74.4	61.0	53.2	45.4	61.1
1966	39.1	43.8	51.6	58.5	67.0	72.7	78.9	77.6	71.9	61.3	51.9	43.1	59.8
1967	46.3	42.9	52.1	62.5	64.9	71.8	77.9	76.6	67.4	60.7	47.8	48.5	60.0
1968	39.1	38.6	53.7	60.4	66.3	76.2	79.3	80.7	72.1	63.4	54.2	41.9	60.5
1969	40.9	42.4	47.0	61.7	68.3	76.9	79.7	75.7	70.9	63.5	49.7	41.5	59.9
1970	36.9	43.8	49.5	61.6	70.1	75.7	78.9	78.4	75.0	64.1	38.9	46.9	59.2
1971	40.5	46.8	49.5	55.9	66.6	77.2	78.6	77.5	76.0	68.1	53.8	53.9	62.0
1972	48.9	44.3	52.2	60.8	66.6	72.4	79.3	77.8	73.5	61.7	52.6	48.7	61.7
1973	42.4	42.2	57.7	60.5	68.8	77.5	79.1	80.0	76.1	65.3	55.8	47.9	62.7
1974	55.3	51.1	62.5	61.0	74.5	79.1	83.1	79.2	75.7	63.5	53.8	46.9	66.3
1975	48.8	51.1	57.2	64.1	75.2	82.3	81.4	86.7	76.9	68.1	57.4	45.5	66.2
1976	44.1	57.2	61.8	69.4	74.1	79.5	83.7	81.4	77.7	62.0	44.8	42.0	64.8
1977	33.3	47.6	61.0	70.3	77.7	80.3	86.8	84.7	81.0	64.4	56.5	44.4	65.7
1978	38.9	37.5	52.5	65.4	71.8	81.7	77.3	79.8	74.6	60.1	57.9	48.1	62.2

TOTAL PRECIPITATION (Inches)

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Ann'l
1936	4.97	4.35	4.89	4.60	1.09	7.46	9.46	2.74	3.16	4.89	3.11	4.81	55.53
1937	7.22	2.57	1.64	6.97	1.4.	1.62	7.29	2.82	2.60	2.29	3.48	2.08	42.99
1938	3.14	1.69	2.04	6.98	6.76	9.71	6.49	1.95	7.50	2.14	2.81	2.62	53.83
1939	4.09	7.07	5.16	3.31	2.26	5.40	7.64	8.89	.92	4.51	3.38	1.92	54.44
1940	2.80	1.99	2.74	2.81	1.98	1.52	4.56	11.07	2.34	.52	3.57	1.99	37.89
1941	1.81	2.54	3.59	4.07	.79	4.94	4.14	2.38	.41	2.00	1.54	4.54	32.75
1942	1.03	2.15	5.60	1.34	2.42	3.41	2.50	6.24	1.62	5.74	1.76	4.24	38.05
1943	3.28	.99	4.58	3.67	4.64	4.19	8.49	2.91	1.39	1.04	1.10	3.97	40.24
1944	4.86	4.95	6.78	3.75	1.51	.89	4.34	4.38	5.08	3.62	4.43	2.67	47.26
1945	2.10	4.67	1.77	1.24	1.42	6.60	8.20	4.58	5.44	1.00	3.22	4.28	44.52
1946	2.87	4.08	2.15	3.87	5.82	6.07	8.27	5.58	6.90	1.87	3.42	1.11	52.01
1947	3.85	.87	4.39	3.99	2.35	6.49	8.36	8.06	5.89	2.89	7.33	2.71	57.18
1948	4.59	5.27	4.00	2.41	5.03	4.08	4.08	4.27	3.65	4.55	8.62	4.82	55.37
1949	1.56	3.65	2.47	3.21	6.10	9.08	7.64	9.01	3.53	1.52	4.48	1.47	53.72
1950	3.23	1.31	3.10	.93	4.19	5.56	12.10	2.59	8.01	2.57	.99	2.59	47.17
1951	1.18	1.86	3.06	2.56	1.34	9.26	4.89	3.39	.96	2.78	4.54	2.11	37.93
1952	2.48	5.62	5.04	2.65	3.41	1.83	7.35	6.50	2.92	.59	4.84	2.28	45.51
1953	2.46	5.06	2.94	4.02	4.06	6.90	1.29	4.74	4.32	.51	2.25	5.04	43.59
1954	5.67	.72	4.98	3.92	3.68	1.28	6.24	5.67	1.81	1.15	1.68	2.81	39.61
1955	3.02	1.94	3.78	1.92	4.65	3.81	7.56	14.18	17.16	1.63	1.63	.87	62.15
1956	2.31	4.76	3.27	2.96	1.83	3.91	7.59	4.22	3.51	6.79	1.02	1.60	43.77
1957	2.69	3.72	5.55	1.80	3.57	1.83	3.03	4.35	7.19	3.36	6.00	4.55	47.64
1958	4.11	4.31	3.54	4.91	6.75	3.28	4.74	12.18	1.33	6.13	2.14	3.31	56.73
1959	1.72	3.92	4.67	6.57	.57	1.59	11.34	6.17	6.18	5.94	2.32	3.07	54.06
1960	5.40	6.54	3.65	2.98	8.67	5.33	11.04	5.95	8.21	2.97	1.08	1.67	63.49
1961	2.43	5.86	3.29	5.30	7.75	4.24	2.70	3.92	3.57	1.89	1.86	3.40	46.22
1962	4.98	2.34	4.84	3.98	3.04	13.24	7.55	2.98	4.64	1.34	4.61	3.09	56.63
1963	4.85	3.32	2.57	1.64	4.18	3.10	4.52	3.82	3.50	.62	5.17	2.82	40.11
1964	5.65	6.15	3.68	2.28	1.29	3.06	3.72	6.54	7.41	8.49	1.72	2.83	52.81
1965	1.66	3.68	3.68	1.92	3.35	11.35	10.16	2.82	2.98	1.90	.84	.51	44.85
1966	5.49	3.98	3.06	1.66	8.09	3.58	1.31	11.24	5.54	0.54	0.89	3.79	49.17
1967	3.96	4.41	0.98	1.83	2.14	1.43	8.35	15.93	3.72	2.36	2.13	3.55	50.79
1968	3.57	0.50	4.36	3.79	7.73	2.20	4.71	1.16	2.90	4.04	3.28	1.83	41.17
1969	3.37	3.29	4.98	3.79	2.66	4.43	5.23	6.78	2.78	1.59	4.60	3.68	47.23
1970	2.83	3.85	2.96	5.30	2.85	2.87	10.13	2.07	1.66	3.06	1.54	3.10	42.22
1971	4.05	6.01	6.02	2.65	6.40	5.37	7.30	4.57	3.65	15.23	2.70	1.22	65.15
1972	3.87	4.36	4.17	2.02	4.83	2.92	4.93	1.69	5.30	2.12	3.72	2.12	42.05
1973	3.75	3.73	3.94	4.66	4.77	4.56	2.37	4.06	2.16	1.63	0.48	8.34	45.55
1974	3.00	3.91	5.91	2.97	5.55	2.44	3.63	9.42	2.77	2.04	1.43	3.55	46.62
1975	5.20	3.45	4.31	2.93	3.12	2.44	10.54	.77	8.52	3.91	.80	4.20	50.19
1976	4.24	1.24	2.25	.80	4.26	3.99	5.58	2.88	5.09	2.86	2.08	4.19	39.46
1977	3.95	2.17	4.25	3.10	7.44	4.45	2.39	6.87	4.16	7.27	3.78	4.99	54.82
1978	6.76	1.79	5.49	4.41	5.90	3.73	5.78	3.20	1.55	3.32	4.44	1.71	48.94

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